

OF THE
SACRIFICE
OF THE
SACRILE, and most ACCEPTED Sacrifice of
a Christian.

Shewing how *scarcely* every soule is bounde to begin, &
betake himself, not only to the *true*, but also
to the *timely* service of God.

A SERMON

Preached at *Hamburg* in November 1677. and
now published at the instant entreaty
of A Godly Christian.

BY

JOHN WING (then) Pastor to the English
Church, *there*.

1677, 16. 20.

*It is wisdom to seek the Lord, till he rejoyce
righteousnes upon you.*



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BY

JOHN WING (譯) 譯者 王 雲五

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AT THE PRESS

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TO THE

Right Honorable, THEOPHILVS, Lord Clinton
EARLE of Lincolne, And to the *vertuous*, and
Right Honorable, the Lady BRIDGET
his wife.

AND TO

The Right Honorable, WILLIAM, Lord Say,
and Seale, with the *Vertuous* and Right
Honorable, the Lady ELISABETH
his wife.

IOHN WING

A poore vnworthy Minister of Iesus Christ,
wisheth all increase of all true *honour*, and
happines, with God, and men.



Right honorable Lords, and Ladyes, I hope it shall not be any way distastefull, or vnpleasing to your *honours*, that a *stranger* is bolde to salute you, from *beyonde the seas*, and to publish your *names*, there, where your *persons* may be as vnkowne to *others*; as *myne* is to your *selves*. I have not presumed on this *double dedication* without all reason; for why? it is *famously* knowne, that you are the *worthy* examples of this subject, wherof I *here* treat. And I cannot but thinke, that they are the *fittest Patroness* of diuine bookes, whome God hath made, the *faithfull Paternes* of the doctrine containd in them. It is *long* since I have heard of your *early*, and *happy* proceedings in piety. Having *now* this opportunity, I could not *longer* contayne in silence, but resol-

ved

EPISTEL DEDICATOTIE

ved to place you in the *beginning* of this little booke,
that they which reade; seeing such *gracious* and *noble*
presidents, of the practise *herein* pressed, might have
the more *powerfull inducements*, to draw them, to doe
the same. The *Lord* of heaven, keepe you *all*, in your
most *holy* course, & bring you to the *end* of this happy
race, that every of *you* may, (after all *honorable salu-*
ties enjoyed on earth) possesse those *infinite*, and
endles glories, prepared, for all that love his name,
in whome I rest,

FLVSHING, the Yours *Honours* in all service,
30. of October 1621. for the *honour* of God.

IOHN WING. *Pastor*
to the *English* church, at
Flushing in ZEE LANT.



Pag. 18. lin. 23. put in, and gave
Pag. 43. lin. 33. put out he
Pag. 49. lin. 24. for albe, read able

ABELS OFFERING,

OR THE

Earely , and most acceptable sacrifice of
a Christian.

Shewing how *soone*, every soule is bounde to be-
gin to betake himself, not only to the *true*,
but also , to the *timely* servi-
ce of God.

Gen. 4. 4.

*And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock,
and the fatt thereof.*



HE three former chapters of this
holy History being spent in the dis-
covery of the *worldes creation* , and
of the most wonderfull and glorious
workemanship of God , as in every
other creature, soe especially in *Man*,
whose happy estate while he *flourished*, and miserable con-
dition when he *fell*, and most gracious *recovery* from
his fall, with divers other *divine* occurrents (next and
immediately following) being at large related vnto
vs. It now pleaseth the *holy Ghost* to goe further in
this sacred narration, and in the beginning of this
fourth chapter, to acquaint vs with the *multiplication*

A

of man.

of man-kinde. And here we have the story of the *first two*, that were ever borne into the world, to wit, the two first *sons*, of their, and our *first* parents, (I dispute not whether they were *sinners*, the text seemeth to contradict it, though some doe *weakely* conceit it, neither doth it carry, or conclude any materiall consequence, whether they were or noe) concerning whome, we have a *threefold* description.

1. of their *birth*, and naturall being. ver. 1. 2.
2. of their *business*, and civill being: ver. 2.
3. of their *religion*, and spirituall condition. ver. 3. 4.

They were both *borne* into the world of their parents: by them also were they both *employed* in the world; and these *two* are only named or mentioned without any further discourse: But the *third* thing, to wit, that which concerneth the matter of *religion*, is that which the Lord doth intend to treat off, and insist vpon. In the world, and affaires of the earth, men may lawfully be of *divers* professions, trades, & occupations and it is needfull they should be soe. But in *religion* it cannot be thus, piety cannot admitt a *diversity*, the blessed worship of God will beare no *variety* at all, it must be *uniforme*, as that *one* God is, who is worshipped. And soe was this of these two brethren, so farre as the same appeared *visibly* to men, in the externall act of sacrificing, which practise they had (*doubtles*) learned of their parents, who were (without question) taught of God how to exercise this duty, though the *letter of the scripture* be silent in both as it is in divers other excellent *truthes*, which yet we stand bound to acknowledg, by vertue of such evident, and vnderstandable consequence as doth clearly conclude

conclude the same, without *litterall* testimony in any expresse tearmes to avouch it.

Now concerning the sacrifice of the sons of *Adam*, *Cain*, and *Abell*, there is a double difference noted.

1. of the *sacrifices* they offred.
2. of the *effect* they found with God, to whom they were offred.

That which is observable in their sacrifices, is this, that whereas *Cain*, carelesly and without choise offred [*of the fruit of the ground*] not regarding *what* he offred, soe he brought *some what*, contrary to the law of those offrings, which required the *first* of all fruits: It is reported of *Abell*, & commended in him, that he was very regard-full and respectiue, to sacrifice to his God, of the *first* of his flock, and among the *first*, the *best* he could pick and chuse.

And according to the difference of these *acts*, the *effect* was also different with the Lord, who seemeth to suite and fit, his *justice* to *Cain*, that as he had *no respect* what *offering* he brought, soe had God *no respect* to him, or that he *offered*; and his *favour* to *Abell*, vnto whose person and sacrifice, the Lord had gracious regard, as he was most heedefull to present the *choyse*, and *chiese*, of all he had to the Lord.

And in this particuler doth *Moses*, the man of God, and pen-man of this part of Gods word, insist, & speaketh much of the things that issued herevpon, both on *Abells* part, and *Cains*.

But here (it may be) some will move a question, how *Moses* who was borne many *hundred*, and some *thousands* of yeares after the creation, could come to know these things, and to set them downe in such *exact* order vnto vs,

To *move* this question, is to *make* question of Gods truth, and to bring into doubt, all that he hath recorded in this whole booke of *Genesis*, and all such other things as fell out before his birth and ripe yeares, in *Exodus*; for in his *infancy* we cannot conceive him to be any way one of Gods principall secretaries, or meete to be entrusted with this rare imployment of penning any part of scripture, especially considering that he was brought vp in *Pharaohs* court as a *Pagan*, for the first *forty* yeares of his life.

But for the cleare manifestation of this matter, and for the justification of the *authority* of this sacred booke against all accursed *cavills*; we answer and doe acknowledge, that howsoever every thing reported therein by *Moses* were acted long before his birth, yet neverthelesse all things written therein, are as absolutely true; as if *Moses* had bene borne, & had seene, and heard, each passage in his owne person. The Lord made choyse of a man living so long after these things were done, that he might honour himself, and this his *sacred* historie about all humane, histories vnder heaven.

For wheras no profane writer is able *infaillibly* to report any thing (for matter of fact) but what was done in his owne dayes, and came to passe in his owne certayne knowledge; the Lord is able to instruct, such as he will set a worke to report the proceedings of his churches in all ages, in the *incontroleable* truth of all things that came to passe, though they that recorded it, were vnborne when they were acted. And who knoweth whether the Lord hath not done this; and of purpose made vse of such persons who had not a *being* in the world, till long after the time wherein the things

ABELS OFFERING.

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things themselves which they relate had their *being*, that soe he might shew himself an *insufficient* instructor of his servants in those things which were done long *before* their time, and declared long *after*.

It is not my purpose to digresse into any generall discourse of those evidences that doe authorise, and warrant the *whole* scripture, which are discovered at large by many worthy, judicious, and learned *Divines* only; that it may manifestly appeare that this booke is no lesse scripture then any other, let vs take into our harts the due consideration of those things which may as *unreproveably* argue God to be the *author*, as *Moses* to be the *penner* of the same, and they are (among a multitude that might be produced) these few that follow.

1. *Moses* doth tell vs of some passages concerning God *before* the creation, which no creature could heare, or vnderstand as that of the first creature, & all the rest, when he sayd of every of them: [*Let there be light, &c.*] who could tell what God spake touching every of these, seing as yet they *were* not, & when they *were*, yet till *man* was created all other were voyd of vnderstanding.
2. Hee relates to vs touching the creation of *man*, what God sayd of his making to wit, the *matter* and *forme* of his body, and the *infusion* of his soule, as also of the manner of the making of the *woman* when the man was in a deepe sleepe, and perceived it not; and what the man sayd of the woman, when the Lord brought her to him.
3. After the creation, he report's the passages of mans *fall*, and discover's the subtiltyes of *Satan*, in seducing the first man and the first woman, which relations

relations must needs be of God, for we cannot conceit that the *diuell* would soe detect himself, in the evill both of his *grosse* sin, and *great* punishment.

4. After mans fall, he tell's vs of divers secret passages, as of *Adams* knowing his wife: of *Cains* anger conceived inwardly, and vnjustly, against *Abel* his brother, before it brake out: of *Noahs* drunkenness, and nakednes: of *Lots* sayling, and the manner therof, how he was abused by his *daughters*, with their close carriage of the matter, & how he knew not what was done, when he had slept with them *both*: of the close conveyance which *Rebecca* vsed to obtayne the blessing for *Iacob*, with the most private circumstances therof: and a multitude more of the like to these things, soe *secret*, that no flesh could know, or relate, but they must needs be recorded by the Lord himself.
5. He make's narration of the *sins*, of the most *holy* men and women, either, *that* which was *common* in those times to most of them, as the *Polygamie* of the *Patriarchs*, or such offences as any *one* of them particularly fell into, not sparing *Abraham* the freind of God, nor any of the *finest* of his servants, which a good man would have done, had he beene guided but by his owne spirit. Nay, (which doth absolutely seale the truth and authority of his writings to be of God) *Moses* spare's not *himself* in his owne sins, but make's a manifest discovery of his owne *infidelity*, and vnadvised *anger*, and the just punishment of God vpon him for them both. This *impartiality*, argue's a supernaturall spirit to guide it: when a man cannot spare his freind, nor himself but
will

will leave both, vpon everlasting record to be blamed and blemished to all posterity. A thing not vsuall (*if as all vsed*) in humane history, wherein men speake, and write the best they *can* (and many times *more then they shoulde*) of themselves, & those whome they favour. It must be God that must make men thus to doe: & therefore this is one of the *prerogatives royall* of his writings.

6. And lastly, he tell's vs of the *most secret things* that can be imagined; nothing can be conceived soe close as the *counsell of heaven*: what God speaketh there, who can heare? especially when he speaketh not in any such fort, or soe openly where Angell's may heare, but in his owne private *closet*, nay (which is yet more) in his owne breast or *bosome*: yet *Moses* can tell the world, not only what God sayd in *heaven*, but what he sayd in his *hart*, & how he was inwardly affected. Soe we finde in *one* chapter of this booke, where *Moses* make's knowne how God [*repented, and was greiued at his hart, as mans wickednes*:] and in *another*, how he was graciously disposed for the continuance of the constant course and succession of all the affaires of this inferiour world saying [*And the Lord sayd in his hart, I will not againe curse the earth &c.*] See, *Moses* is privy to Gods *hart*, and can make vs know, what were his most inward resolutions. And who could give him the least light, or acquaintāce of these things but God himself, who made him his *secretary*, and so made these *secrets* knowne to him.

And thus by all these *evidences*, (which are *common* to all other scripture as well as this, but *counmunicable* to no bookes but the booke of God) we see that the-

re is no reason of doubting or debateing any thing in this parte of holy writ, (or any parcell of it) because it was penned by *Moses*, and he borne so long after all things written and recorded in the same, were gone and past. He had a singuler and allsufficient *tutor*, even the most wise God, and he himself did *endite*, all that he taught and enabled *Moses* to write, so that every jot and tittle of this booke of *Genesis*, must be of absolute and infaillible truth.

And soe having now (by the way) cleared this scruple, we should proceede vnto our discovery of *Abels* sacrifice, as we have it here layd downe, in the words of the text which make report vnto vs *what kinde* of sacrifice it was, and *wherof* it consisted. But we must (*first*) take away another doubt, which may be made by some, how *Abell* could know the *minde* of God for *these matters*, and soe readily offer a sacrifice of this kinde, and doe it soe suitably to Gods *prescription*, considering, that as yet the *law* of the offering of first fruits, nor any other part of the *morall*, or *ceremoniall* was not given. We answer, it was *given*, but not *written*, as we have it *now*, it was given in those dayes by divine *tradition*; *originally* from God to man, and *successively* from man to man.

Then did the *father* informe the *childe*, & acquaint him with the duties that pertayned to piety, and the *children* they received it from their *parents*, & obeyed it as from God.

And *this* course and manner of revealing the will of God by *this kinde* of traditiō, endured all the dayes of the holy *Patriarches*, and such as lived after them, till *Moses*, and also during all the dayes of *Moses*, till that part of his life, wherein the Lord employd him
about

about the penning of this booke, and that is *diversly* conjectured of; *some* suppose it to be written *before* he went into *Egypt* within the compasse of these forty yeares wherein he kept sheepe in *Madjan*; *others* imagine he did it immediately after his departing out of *Egypt*, even in the first yeare therof. Howbeit this, (as the former) is no point of such importance, as that we must of necessity have an exact knowledge of the same.

But that Gods law was delivered by this kinde of *tradition*, till the time we speake off, we nothing doubt, and therefore the more foule is that slander layd vpon vs by the *papist*, that we acknowledg not, nor endure any *traditions*; indeede those that are *popish* and *unwritten*, we cannot abide, but doe abhorre them all, because *none* of them can be defended but by *blasphemy*, and *some* of them (in particuler) are apparantly *blasphemous*. But that there were traditions *once*, to wit, such as the Lord by *himself*, or by his *Angells*, made knowne to *man*; & man beleaved & related to his posterity, we doe no more deny, then we doe that *Moses* penned this part of holy scripture, which (till his time) was a *tradition* and *unwritten*, but can be *none* from that time forward. And if the Lord have ceased his *owne*, hath any man power to erect *more*, that are none of *his*? especially now that his holy will is *sufficiently* revealed, in the writings of the *Law*, and *Prophess*, & the *Gospell*. That there *were some* traditions we freely confesse; that any *are* (of God) now we directly deny; those that *are* (being not of God) we detest, because they are the fruit of the *Popes* braine, who hath a very *crazy* head in heavenly things, though he be applauded to be the *head* of the church, and able to distill *spirituall* influence

influence into it.

But to returne to *Abel*, it is probable, that he received the light and knowledge he had to offer sacrifice, from his father, who from God did instruct him how, and what to doe, in such duties as were to be required of him. And vpon *this* did he embrace, and obey the Lord in his ordinauces; which course of *his*, and his *forwardnes* thus to doe, in those *times* wherein no scripture was *penned*, nor every man that spake of the things of God *iraditionally*, so infallibly inspired, as were *all* they, by whome the Lord hath left his truth *Written* to vs, shall rise vp against vs, to condemne our *untowardnes*, who refuse to be *taught* of God, and to be obedient to him, though he hath left vs a more happy way to *learne*, then they had, who had but a *part* of his good pleasure manifested, and that *not Written*, whereas we have the *Whole*, and *Written*, vpon such records as can never be razed. The *saints*, of those *times*, were most willing to take knowledge of the wayes of God and yeeld their obedience to them, by that meanes (which in comparison of *ours*) are but *meane*, and were but *Weake*, (yet enough to bring them to God, who lived by faith in the truth *thus* revealed). The *sinners* of our dayes, to whome the Lord hath dispenced a *more* absolute, and *more* sufficient course, of comming neere to him, are farre from the Lord, and will not give him, neither *such*, nor soe *much* duty, as these did, whose knowledg and practise is not soe much *magnified*, as ours shalbe manifested & *plagued* of the Lord, who looke's *they* should be the *best* schollers, who have the *best* teaching. Miserable will it be with those men to whome the Lord shall say; *these* knew little of my minde (in respect of *you*) yet have done much; I

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made

made it all knowne to you, yet have you done litle or nothing.

Let not this consideration be in vaine, but thinke we, how *cheerfully* Abel learned, & how *conscionably* he performed, the worship of his God, having but *litle helpe* to further him: that we by due ponderation herof, may be both *ashamed* for our saylings past, and enforce our selves, (as it were) by a *holy violence* for time to come, to be more faithfull and industrious, both to *know*, and to *doe*, what on our part, we owe vnto the Lord, what vnspeakeable shame is it, that we should lye *behinde* them, that have gone *before* vs in those duties, wherein *many* of them, had but *few* to follow, nor any scripture to learne them: but we have both Gods *whole* booke to *guide* vs, and all his blessed saints are gone before vs, yet are we exceeding short of those holy ones who lived graciously in that age which may truly be called the *infancy* both of the *world*, and of the *church*; But I will not dwell here, we see the holy Ghoste beare's record of *Abels* offering: let vs now come to the words of the text which tell vs what manner of sacrifice it was. And *Abel*, *he also brought of the* [*firstlings*] *or, first borne* [*of his flock, and of the fass of* *them.*]

Of the *firstlings*, or, *first borne*] that is, the first increase of cattell that the Lord gave him; The Lord made a most *exall* law for the offerig of the *first borne*, both of man, and beast, and of all fruits vnto him, and this law of his we finde to be very frequently repeated, in diuers places of the foure bookes of *Moses* *Exodus* *Leuiticus* *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomie*. And as it was often iterated by God to *Israel*, soe was it faithfully obeyed by *Israel*, before the Lord, both *before*

Exod. 22.
29. 30.
cap. 34. 19
26.
Leuit. 23.
10. 12.
Num. 15.
20. 21.
Deut. 12.
17.
cap. 18. 4.
cap. 26. 14.
2. 11.

2.Chron.
31.1.31.
Neh.10.
1.32.35.

the captivity in *Hezekiah* dayes ;and *after*, in the dayes of *Nehemiah* , as appeareth in the storie of their lives: nay, from the begining, before this law was given (in writing) *Abel* (you see) is carefull to bring his *first*, and I nothing doubt, but *Adam* his father did it *before* him, as we noted before.

But here it way be enquired wherefore these things were offred, in *those* times , and among all the *Jewes* to the time of *Christ*, and are not *soe* now among *us*, were they proper to their worship?

We answer, they were *soe* as the *Jewish* people were a people *peculiar* to God, and he taught them his minde after such a manner, as never *any nation* but they had it, to wit, by shaddowes , types and ceremonies, such as were to endure for a season , and to dye when once *Iesus Christ* the Lord of life did appeare, and had fulfilled this law of *Jewish rites*, which perished and became frustrate (in Gods purpose) as loone as, his [*consummation est*] was out of his mouth.

But if these *Mosaicall* rites were *shaddowes* , what was the *substance*? what was the truth and signification of these types, and ceremonyes, and of these *first* fruites, and *first* borne, in particuler?

Neh. 10.1

We answer ; all men must know that the whole ceremoniall law was a type, or shaddow, the *apostle* tells vs *soe*, & (in the generall) every ceremonie therein did *some way* respect *Christ* , who is the end of *this law* & hath abolished the same; one way or other ; *Christ* was aymed at in *each* offering. Now for the matter meant and signified by these *first* fruites, and *first* borne they also had their reference to the Lord *Iesus*, who is entituled, both [*the first fruits of them that sleepe*] and, [*the first borne of every creature*. Yet not to him *only*, (though

1 Cor. 15.20

2. U

(though *principally*) had they their *totall* relation , as if nothing else at all , were to be shaddowed by these things , but , as to *him* (to wit , to Christ) they were *strictly* , and *properly* assigned , soe , in a *larger* sence and *use* , the perpetuall morality of this law was , that our choystest , and cheife , our first , and best , the prime and principall , (not of our *fruits* , or of our *beast* , but) of our *lives* , of our *selves* , should be given to the service of our God . That alsoone as he pleaseth to enlarge and encrease the *abilities* of our bodyes , and *facultyes* of our soules , that we can once discerne betweene good and evill , and are able to put a difference betweene these in our opinion , and practise , we should *incontinently* , and forth-with betake our selves to worship and obey the Lord , and from that time proceede in the same , during all our dayes .

But it is further noted here , in the text , that *Abells* sacrifice was [*Of the fatt of his flock .*]

Fatt in scriptures hath divers references , and (*accordingly*) divers sences , as the nature of things to which it is referred doth require . It retaineth his naturall signification , when it is referred to *naturall* things : we read of *Fatnesse* attributed to the *earth* , to *oyle* ; to *wine* , the *best* of which , God doth call the *fattest* , and the *fattest* of any thing is the *best* , as the *fattest* land , the *best* land ; and soe of the rest . And soe we account the *fattest* beast , the *best* , & especially being young too ,) as these first-borne were .

Gen. 27.
28. cap.
45. 18

But when *fattnes* is affirmed of things *spirituall* (or things *naturall* , considered *spiritually*) it carrieth contrary sences , and signifies both the *best* , and the *worst* . For we finde *David* where he would shew a most sinfull hart , to say , it is a [*hart as fatus bawne* ,]
and

and the Prophet *Isaiah*, and *Christ* after him, when they speake of a hart given over of God, say thus [*make the hart of this people fass.*] On the other side, the most abundant and *best blessings* pertayning to the solacing of the saints, are called [*the fannes of thy house:*] and those godly and *well-growne* christians, who have eaten, and fed freely, of those *divine delicates*, and by the benefit of them are come to some good measure of ability, in good things, are sayd to be [*fass and flourishing.*]

But with this *myssicall* sence, or vse of the word we meddle not, in our text it is taken most *properly*, for fat beasts, [*the fat of his flock*] that is the *best* there. So that the *summe* of all that is sayd here of *Abells* offering is *this*: that *he* being made partaker of true grace and guided by God to, shew it in the fruits thereof, doth by faith offer vnto God such a sacrifice as was *now* required, namely, the first, & (among all the first) the *very best* of the flock he did attend.

Ifay *now* required, for a *sier*, ward God commanded and expected *more*, but as yet there was *no* temple, or tabernacle, *no* high preist, *nor* any Levite, *no* fire from heaven, (at least) that burnt continually, nor many other things, which came in, in succeeding times: *some* when the *Arke* and tabernacle was erected, *more*, when the *Temple* was builded, and all other things set in order, according to Gods prescription touching each particuler.

Howbeit *Abel* (in the meane time) doth his best, and offers to his vtmost power, what *his* present state, and the present *time* may permit, shewing thereby that *true* grace will doe what it *can*, though it cannot doe *all* it would, or should, in the seruice of God; others

Note.

others may doe *more*, in times & places which afforde more meanes, but sincerity will shew it self in the *most* that may be done for the time being; though we enjoy but litle meanes, or few helps to further vs, yet a sounde hart will make some honest *shift*, to doe something that may be pleasing to God.

This is worth noting (by the way) because it meete's *fitly*, with their fearefull impiety, who let all religion and piety *alone*, because they cannot doe *all*: like to miserable and desperate *bankrupts*, who because they are not able to give every man *all*, will pay nothing *at all* to any mā; which deceit who could endure? Nay, learne to doe better of good *Abell* (and all Gods saints who lived in the first times) doe something the *most* and *best*, thou canst, and the Lord will accept thee according to the *willing* minde thou hast, to goe as farre as *weake* meanes will further thee. A man doth not more manifest *weake* grace, in not doing Gods worke *completely*, then he doth evidēce *true* grace in doing what he is able to doe, *conscionably*. The Lord regarde's men according to *his* meanes, and *their* mindes, in his service. They that offred vprightly before the *preisthood* was ordered; were as acceptable to God; and *some* of them had as *much*, and *all* of them had as *true* grace, as any that sacrificed after. A *wise* christian, may employ *much* grace, vpon *litle* meanes, and (I thinke) the *least* meanes that ever the Lord doth give, may excercise the *most* grace the best of vs have, if we play the *good husbands*, & set it well a work. But this is by the way, let vs now make toward the *mayne* thing, we meane to handle in this offering of *Abel*, which is soe commended in him, both here &

Note.

Note.

Heb. 11. 4

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*Doctri-
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And that is, *that morall* of this practise ceremoniall, which concerneth vs christians, to wit, *That it is the undeniable duty of every one, to giue vnto God the glory of his first abilityes, both of soule & body, & to bestow their first powers in the seruice of his maiesty.*

This lesson *Abell* needed not to have learned of the *first* borne of his beasts, had not his father *Adam* fallen, and deprived him (and vs all,) of those *first & best* fruits of created grace, which the Lord gave him, when he filled him the *first* day of his life, with the perfection of all knowledge, holynes, and righteoulnes, and made him as holy, and as happy, as a creature might be on this earth. Had not these *first fruits* of this grace perished in the first *Adam*, soe, as that neuer man but he might taste them, they would have taught vs what to doe assoone as we could have done any thing, *that grace &c.* would quickly have carried vs to the fountaine of *grace*, from whence, as it came but *lately*, it would have returned *naturally*, as the rivers into the sea. For *Adams* graces were as *naturall*, as his breath, it was all one to him, to doe any duty to God, and to himself, both were *alike easy* vnto him.

But now the case is altred, it is nothing soe, but cleane contrary altogether, his first *best* lesson must be taught *Abel* (yea and *Adam* too) by his first *best* beast which he must now give to that God to whome he should have given *himself* from his *first* being, this beast must be sacrificed to *shame* him, who being *once* wholly Gods, hath *now* made himself worse then the beast that perisheth, *now* must man have *dumbe* schoolemasters that cannot speake, and *unreasonable* yea *sencelesse* also, which cannot vnderstand or heare his speech, and somewhat must be done to them, assoone as they

they are in the world, to shew man, what we once (*when time was*) could have done, and what for ever he ought to doe, from the time of his owne first being. The *first* of our flock, the *first* of our fruit, must teach vs to whome the *first* of our selves, doth of right appertaine: even to the Lord, to whome a *beast* must be giue ceremonially, in stead of a *man* morally. And this being *one* morall and meaning of this ceremonie, it most needes be our duty thus to doe. Even this *shadow* shewe's vs, that as a *substance* and a *shadow*, doe from the first instant goe together *inseparably*, and for ever; soe should we have beene to our God, ever from our beginning to have followed him wheresoever he had gone before vs, and to have cleaved continually to him, in the obedience we owe him all the dayes of our life, both first and last.

And this truth of God of the *early* offering of our selves vnto the Lord, is not only typed out and signified here, by these *first* beastes, and fruits, that must be sacrificed; but it is substantially confirmed in other scriptures, wherein the Lord doth more *expresly*, manifest his minde in this matter.

I will not, (for I neede not) heape vp many evidences; let vs consider only, to what end it may be (if this be not Gods truth,) that the Lord doth soe often call vpon parents, touching their duty to their children on this behalfe, to nurture, to tutor, & instruct them, in all holy informations, even in their *childe-hood*, *non-age* and *minority*, so soone as they can be discerned to be capable and vnderstanding in any thing. [*Teach a childe*] saith *Salomon*: [*Fathers, bring vp your children in the feare and information of the Lord*] saith *Paul*, with moe that might be added. In any of which, dare any

man imagine that the Lord calls for any thing more then *his due*, and if he doe not, then doth the duty of our *first dayes* belong to the Lord, our *first* powers, & abilities, are his in all right, and he must have our *service*, soe soone as we can doe *any*.

Againe, why are many commended in scripture for being carefull herin, and their examples recorded for our *imitation*? is it not because we should trace them in this truth which some of them have learned, *more* then we, with much *lesse* teaching then we have? For instance, *Abraham*, who in his owne *first times*, was trayned vp in idolatry with *Terah* his father, and soe he gave not the *first* fruits of his owne life, yet for his posterity, God presumeth on his fidelity this way, and faith, he knew his minde soe well for this matter, that he was sure [*he would teach his children and command them*] in the things of God, and therevpon acquaints him with his secret purpose concerning *Sodome*. We see *Abraham* did know this our *doctrine* to be his duty, yet he had neither his *fathers* example, nor his *owne* practise in his *first* yeares, nor *Salomon*, nor *Paul*, to call vpon him but the Lord *himself* taught him this truth, him a hart to doe it.

And have you not also read what is recorded of *Hannah*, the happy mother of *Samuell*, and what her resolution was, when she went to pray for a childe before she had ever a one, namely this, to give him to God, and that soe, as the Lord might have the *first* fruits of him, even [*from the day of his birth to the day of his death*,] and when the Lord saw her soe well resolved, he quickly graunted what she desired.

It were as easy to instance many *more*, as these *two*, who have hearkened to God herin, & honoured him with the

the first of these *fruits of their body* which he had given them, as of olde *these* did with the *fruits* of their *beasts*. But we will cease examples, and vrge the *reasons* of the point, which are these that follow.

First, God is the *best master* we can serve, and therefore we have reason to goe about his service the *first* 1 Reason. thing we doe, when once we can doe any thing at all. That he is our *best master*, appeareth not only in his *nature*, he being every way infinitely good, but also in his infinite *favour*, which sheweth it self, both in that he gives vs the *best Worke*, and the *best Wages* in the world. Our *Worke* is to worship and obey him, and to doe *only* those things which are *best* for our selves, whereby we may be most happy in our soules and bodyes, both being at peace with him, and enjoying all things in a sanctified and sweete estate. Our *Wages* (besides his manifold mercyes here) is all inconceivable blessednes, that heaven can afford vs, the glory of that kingdome, wherein we shalbe *glorious kings* with himself for ever and ever. Now what would any man doe *first*, that were guided but by naturall reason? even that which he might benefit most by, Beholde then here is.

the *best master* that can be *desired*
the *best service* that can be *performed*.
the *best Wages* that can be *received*.

Let any reasonable man judge whether he have not *reason* to set himselfe so soone as is possible to this truth.

Secondly, they are like to proue his *best* servants, that begin *soonest* to serve him, for why? our *first* abilities 2 Reason. are *freest* from sin, and least taynted with evill, and soe much more apt, and able to good, then when once

they have beene habituated, and soaked, and seasoned may poysoned, with *actuall impiety*, aded to that *naturall impurity*, which is in vs, and by both these, made *utterly unmeet* for the Lord, as they cannot but be, when once *Satan* hath got in, and had the *first hanse* of our harts, and soe possess vs of a childe, that we have beene his vassalls, in the base, and hellish bondage of sin and rebellio against God: it is hard getting of him *out*, if he be once in possession, more hard, if he have beene in, *longe*. But if the Lord enter vs at *first*, we are his for *ever*, he cannot be gotten *out* by all the devills in hell, if once he have the happy possession of our harts, he will holde *his owne*. Seing therefore we are *first* for him in our *first* times, let vs know, it is good reason we should *then* give ourselves vnto him, especially considering we can never (at the *best* we can be) come any thing neere that fitnes which once we had, when we were *full* of that created grace wherof we spake before.

Reason.

Thirdly, our first fruits must of necessity be bestowed, and employed one way or other, to *good* or to *evil*; to God or to the *Devill*, it cannot be avoyded but *one* of the *two*, must have the vse of vs from the *first* time we are fit for any thing. We must needs belong either to the *one*, or to the *other*; religion tell's vs we cannot belong to *both*, and let *reason* speake to which of the *two*, it is best belonging: I say let *reason* speake, for no man can be soe vnreasonable, as to make any doubt, or the least demurre vpon it. If the Lord have vs, it is *that* he would have, if the devill get vs, woe vnto vs, we must account with God, for all the service we have done him, even for every act, & when this heavy account is made vp, we must vndergoe Gods eternall curse

curse for our service; and receive the hire of our worke with *him* (whome we have served) in *hell*, where the worne never dyeth, and the *fire* never goeth out.

Soe that, inasmuch as our *first* fruits must goe to *one* of these, and that it will be soe miserable with vs, if *Satan* seize vpon vs, let vs beleeeve the truth of our doctrine and doe accordingly.

I, (will some say) that is a good *motion*, and well it *Objections* were with vs if we could doe as you say, but we cannot, it is not in our power *now*, true it is, that *once* it was, but it is as true, that *now* it is not, and that is well knowne, yea *too* well, to our selves, and to God; how then would you have vs doe herein? doth God require what he knowe's we cannot doe? doe his precepts contayne *impossibilities*? will he have vs vnder-take that which we are not able.

I answer, all that can be pleaded (though never soe *Solutions* truly) cannot on our part *nullify* any truth of God taught vnto vs, any precept of God imposed on vs: soe long as all that we would *excuse* our selves by, is long of our selves, and that whereby the Lord may *accuse* vs most justly, because (of our *selves*, without *him*) we fell from our *perfection*, and *power* we had, to give all duty to him at *all times*.

True it is, and too true, that we cannot give our selves *now* from our *first*, as we could have done in our created state, but what of that? doth our *imbecility* weaken the *necessity* of this duty? is Gods commandement ever the weaker because we are worse then we were, whan he gave his? can our corruption cancell or abate any jot or title of his truth? Noe, it doth, and will stand in full power, force, and
 vertue

vertue against vs: we have *enfeebled*, and *vnfisted* our selves for God, but *his* law, *his* will is as absolute and as strong as ever, his counsell must *stand* though we *fall*, he is all *one* in commanding, though we be not *foe* in obeying; it is *we* with whome the *case is altered*, not *he*, for he is [*Iehovah and changeth not.*] He neede not, vnlesse he please (for he is noe way tyed by any necessity) to take notice of our inabylity, if he doe, he may the more righteously reprove, and vpbrayd vs; if he doe not *foe*, it is his greater favour, not to cast it in our teeth. He may to this day expect, (and therefore much more command) that every one of vs should be as *Adam* was at his *best*, & condemne and plague vs for our vnfruitfullnes, if we be not: as Christ did curse the fig tree for want of fruit, though it be expressly sayd by one Evangelist that [*the time of figs was not yet*] that is, *that time* which ordinarily, *now* vnder nature *corrupted*, it did vsually beare fruit; it seemeth (nay it is more certaine) that before the earth was cursed, all fruits should have beene more frequent and abundant, yea, almost *continuall* (as some have conceived) like the trees in the paradise of God. And soe our Saviour to shew, not only his *power*, but his *righteousnes*, cursed it, because it was not *foe* fruitfull, as it was by creation, taking no notice of the vnfruitfullnes of it, or of the want of fruit which came to passe at this time of the yeare, by reason of the curse through our corruption. And thus may he deale with vs, for that we are not at *all* times fruitfull in those graces, of his good spirit, wherewith *once* he furnished vs, and made vs, meete and able (*at any time*) to honour him. What hath he to doe with our falling, and insufficiency to doe his will? that lyeth betweene the *devill*, and *vs*, to

answer

Mark.
11. 13.

Ren. 22. 2

Note.

answer, the Lord hath no hand in it, nor cannot be *taxed* with it in any respect, he commande's no more then he made vs *fit* for. So that there is no objecting this, to any *good* end, vnlesse it be (as it ought to be) to humble vs, for that we are not, as we were *once* (and should have beene *ever*) and therevpon discerning our inability, to doe the Lord all the duty we owe him from our *first* breath; as also, seing by absolute right, he may as well challenge it of vs, as of the *first Adam*; we herevpon bestirre our selves the more, and the better, to hasten both our selves and others, vnto the practise of this instruction, and soe turne all this (by the power of *grace*) into a *provocation*, which corrupt *nature* (peruersly) vrgeth as an *objection*.

And thus the point is proved, and this scruple, (or cavill rather) removed, let vs now come to the *uses* of the point, which are *three*, and doe concerne all sorts of men: to wit.

the *children* of God, for *consolation*.

the *ungodly*, for *reprehension*.

all *men*, for *instruction*.

And first for the saints, the sons and daughters of God, it cannot be but exceeding happy & comfortable to them, who have *harts* convinced of this truth, and *lives*, that have expressed it, since the first day it was revealed to them from the Lord, before whome, they have sincerely endeavoured, to give him the *first fruits* of their *knowledge* of this *lesson*, though, either through their owne *personall* ignorance therof, or through the error of *parents* in their education, they have not given him the *first fruits* of their practise while they were in their non-age.

It is a most happy thing to be *rightly* convicted of a
divine

^r
Vse.

divine truth, because many are *superficially* perswaded, an will give a *slight* consent, (& *lesse*, the Divell, if he be put to it, wil not doe) to many holy truthes of God, but *they* whome the Lord convinceth a *right*, (as he doth all his *owne*) he cōforteth, in giving them, a harts resolution setled in their very soules, to say within themselves; *this is the vndoubted truth of the everliving God, thus, we must doe, & endeavour to siire up others to doe the same; and if it be a truth which we should haue practised before, we must repent for neglect past, & be vpright with God for the time remayning, and goe the faster because we began soe late, and doe our best to draw others after vs, to that way which both they, and we should haue gone, long before. He that is thus convicted, shall not goe long vncomforted.*

It is a simple impossibility, that men called at their *ripe yeares*, or in their *age*, should give their *first* fruits to the Lord, those dayes are gone, and *past*: but to giue the Lord (at what time it pleaseth him to call vs) the glory of *this truth*, in our sounde perswasion, that it is *thus*, and singleharted humiliation, because it had not place in our practise before *now*, & most carefull provocation to our vtmost possibility, that it may be *thus* in *ours*, and all *others*, with whome, by any good meanes, we can prevayle, this is to be truly happy, and in a most comfortable condition, & we are accepted of God (*thus doing*) as if we had done it our selues from the first day of our life.

How famous is *Abraham*, few men soe much renowned in religion as he, *none* more, yet from his childe hood, he had not done service, but to *Satan* in idolatry, and such other impiety, as usually accompanieth that iniquity. But at the *first call*, he came, and asse-

ne as he heard he did obey, and perceiving that the Lord had *lost* such duty by him, as in his *former* dayes he should have received from him, he is *convinced* hereof, and resolved, that his *children* shall give it, though his owne *childe-hood*, was given to sin. And the discerning of *this* in him, was *that*, that gave the Lord content, and *Abraham* comfort.

Is not *Moses* a man abundantly magnified, and that of God himself, as if he had beene (as indeede he was) some *extraordinary* servant of his, yet, for *forty* yeares of his life, what was he, (so farre as we finde?) but such as others were that lived in the *court* of that *Pagan* Prince, who was the oppressor, and adversary of Gods people; it may be, he might be *lesse grosse*, then some of his *fellow courtiers*, who were inclined to egregious impiety, but that he was *good*, or favoured of any saving *grace*, is more then appeareth to me. Howbeit inasmuch as he freely and resolutely, cast off all the *credits*, and *proffits* of his high dignity, & preheminance in court, when the Lord would *summon* him to serve him, it was well taken, that from *that age*, and time, he wayted on the worke of God, though neither his *childe-hood*, nor *youth* were the Lords, in time past.

What should I multiply *more* (as I might) of many other most worthy *saints*, who in the same *case*, have had the same *comforts*, what is *over-past*, and cannot be *actually* recovered, and performed, if it be rightly repented of, in our *selues* and reformed in *others* (to our best power, it is *all one*, as if we had done it in our owne person. Let vs bewaile our owne want of *duty* and Gods want of *glory* by vs, and doe as *Hannah* did, for *such* as may come within our possibility to *dispose* off, or *perswade*, namely, give them to the Lord from

the *first* instant, that we have any interest in them, and it shalbe well with vs.

And *this* I doe (of purpose) insert here, because *Satan* is malicious, and hungry, to gnaw vpon the very hartes of Gods saints, when once he gett's a *truth* by the end, wherein, their time (for performance) is *past*, then doth he come with his *pearcing* temptations to wounde, and rende, the soules of such as are single harted, and to lay it in their dish, that *this*, and *that*, they should have done long since, God should have had their *whole lives* for his service, now *many yeares* be gone, and there can be noe recalling of them, and can they thinke which way to make all well, when it is an vtter impossibility to recover *one moment*, much lesse, many yeares: with *these*, and the like *spightfull*, and greivous suggestions, he doth *teare*, and *torture* their gracious mindes to breede despayre in them.

But now we are armed (I hope) to answer him, and that we may doe, and pay him *double*, both for *himself*, to whome we may say with joy and scorne; *better once then never*, for thy part, thy *first dayes* were as due to God as mine, but he will neuer call, but ever accurse thee; and for our selves; but for my part, though I haue lost my *first dayes*, my God will not lose me ever, seing he call's once and he that com'e's then, comes time enough for mercy, though he should haue came sooner in duty: and moreover, know the Lord hath made many a happy man for his best service, among those who in their *first dayes* haue beene souly mist: I greiue, that I gave him not my child-hood, or youth; but if he please to accept of my age I joy, and will joy, and doe my best to offer all that I can prevaile withall, as soone, as I should haue offered my self.

Note.

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These and the like *answers*, will confound his *cavills*, and make him weary of vs: and he being thus resisted, our God and *We*, may be the more intimate and familiar; in the sweetest passages of his singuler favour.

And see we see there is sounde comfort for such as are perswaded herof, and *would* have done it, and are *humbled* because God hath beene robbed of his right in their minority.

Againe; for such as have offered their first fruits to the Lord, there comfort cannot be *behinde* (if it exceede not) theirs that went *before*. Our *Abell* here, who was soe carefull to give the Lord the *first* of his *flocke*, and, (I cannot easily doubt but, that he gave the *first* of *himself* also) how doth the Lord magnify him in this his service and duty? *Did* he not most graciously regard him and his offering? *hath* he not put it here into his owne booke to his perpetuall prayse, and not only *here*, but else-where in the *new* testament once and againe, that from the *beginning* to the *end* of the world, he might be famous, wheresoever either *this*, *text*, or *those*, should be preached, that which he hath done, should not be forgotten? *Did* he not most deeply avenge his innocent blood vpon his impious brother, and made him the *first* and most fearfull *spectacle* of his justice, and malediction, to the *terror* of all succeeding generations? And (which is *more* then all this) hath not the Lord *crowned* him with glory and immortality in the heavens with himself, as well as *renowned* him for holynes, and piety here on earth?

He is the *first*, whose soule every saw the face of God, noe man ever went from earth to heaven *before* him, among the innumerable spirits of iust and perfect

men who now, and for ever live there with the Lord in glory. He was the first *martyr*, & had the first *crowne* none ever *died* for the Lord before him, none could *line* with the Lord before him: he was the Lords first *wiues*, & among all the Lords *worshyes* this righteous *Abel* (as Christ call's him) stood in the *fore-front* of the battell, & shed *the first blood* for the *faith*, & testimony of *Iesus*, before there was any to *back* or *abett* him.

And as the Lord tooke great notice of this *first*, soe also, hath he done in like manner of the *rest*, who have began betime to be acquainted with him, in his service. How came *Samuell* to be soe rare a man, and to be numbred among the most speciall *favourites* of God, *Moses*, *Iob*, *Daniell*, *Noah*, &c? Why; doe you not remember what we have sayd of his *mother*, how she gave him to God (in resolution) *before* she had him and was as good as her word, as soone as he was *weaned*; doe you not remember what is sayd of himself [the childe *Samuell* ministered before the Lord] the childe *Samuell*; this was worthy to be accounted *wonderfull*; that a *childe* should minister before the Lord, especially being *so yong*, that; as yet) he knew not the *voyce* or *call* of God, from *Elyes*, but ranne to *Ely*, once and againe, when the Lord called vpon him, about the *first* busines he had to doe for him.

What may be the cause that *Iosiah* is soe *mightrily* commended, that, as if he were *matchlesse* it is sayd of him, [*thas abere was none like before him*] nor any to succeede that should be such a *one*; as this peerlesse prince was; true it is, that never any king, either of *Israell* or *Iudah* (no not among the *good kings*) before or after him, went *see farre* in the worke of God for the *purgatio* & *punishing* of his worship, as he did; this king did surmount

furmout them all: but how is it that *he* came to *doe*, what none had *done*, more then they all? why; he begun to worke the worke of God betime; & that may be a mayne reason why he did so much: at *eight yeare olde* (saith the scripture) [*he sought the Lorde,*] and that is but in childe-hood, all men know. 2. King. 23. 1.

What should I tell you of *Solomon*, of *Timothie*, and such others as I might mention to this purpose; nothing is more *sure*, then this, that they have beene the *rarest*, and most excellent men, in piety, and religion, and the *most able* instruments of Gods honour, who in the *beginning* of their dayes, have *begun* to doe good, they must needes be *necesse* heaven, who set out on their way, *soonest*, & continue going on thither-ward.

Only, it is *seldome*, that we see any enter vpon religion soe *early* now a dayes, they are very *few*, that begin to be soe soone *faithfull*. The *more* are they to be *admired* of godly men, and the *more* to be *comforted* of God, who are founde *sucklings* in grace, as soone as they are *weanlings* in nature, and hang vpon Gods *breasts*, when they have given over they *mothers*. Note.

So that by all that hath beene sayd, it appeareth to be a *happysing*, and they to be most *happymen*, who have learned *this lesson* of the Lord, and walked according to the *lights* therof, which leade's on directly in the way of *life*, wherein howsoever a man may (*possibly*) meete with some molestation, and *miserie*, yet the *end* of it will (vndoubtedly) be *endles*, & infinite *glory*, with *him*, who wil make those most glorious beyond *all time* who betooke themselves to glorify him *betime*.

Much might be spoken to enlarge their consolation who have *bars*, to doe according to *this* instruction. But of this more hereafter: we now passe to our 2. *Vse*.

And

2.
Vsc.

And that concerneth all vngodly persons, who howsoever they *will* (because they *must*, and cannot for *Harke shame*, say otherwise) after a sort acknowledge this our *doctrine* to be true; yet walke (most wickedly) in a course farre *wyde* of it, nay, cleane *contrary* to it: their mouthes cannot be soe *monstruously* finfull, but they must confesse it to be a truth, howbeit, their hellish *baris*, and *lives*, doe deny it in their most impious practise all the dayes of their life: yea they have taught their tongues to lye herin notoriously, and that not to *men* alone, but to the *Lord*, of whome and of whose service they vse to say, *it is not yet time, it may be time enough beare as yet*.

O yee impious children of the father of *lies*, can you say it is true, that every one should begin *betime*, and it were not amisse if it were *see*, and yet tell God and men to their faces, that *anytime* is time enough: hereby, you shew your selves to be the very *jumps* of the devill, who hath taught you such a *language*, as *one part* of your speech confutes, nay confound's *another*, and such a *practise*, as *overturnes* Gods *truth* which you dare not deny, and confirms that *falsehood* which none ought to affirme: Miserable soules, how are yee given over of God into the *hands*, nay into the *bands* of *Satan*, who if you speake or breath out but *one true word*, can make your life, both to *bely*, and *abolish* that, and to ratify every *joy*, and *title* of those infernall *falsehoodes*, that he suggests into your soules,

Doe yee not sin *presumptuously*, and against the light of your owne knowledg, and conscience, that *can thus* speake, and *dare thou* doe? and is *such* a sin a light matter, or easy to answer to the judge of the whole worlde? know, you will not find it soe, in the day of

the

the great and vniverfall *Assize*, when all flesh shall at once stand before him to *give* account, and receive recompence, according to what they have done.

Notwithstanding the *World* hath beene ever full (& *hell* wilbe one day full, of soe many of them as repent not) of such, as either turne God out of *all time*, or bring him in the *scale* of all the time they live, and that houre of our *life* which fall's out to be soe neere *death*, that a man cā neither serue *himself* nor the *World* nor *Satan*, because of extreme imbecility of body, is reserved for God, to serue him in, though it be but in saying *Lord haue mercy vpon me*: And this they dreame to be enough to bring them to heaven, *shar*, or their *Pater noster*, (if they can but have time to say it) will make them *happy enough*, they care for *no more*, and soe (poore fooles) they goe like *oxen* to the slaughter, conceiting that *two* or *three* words speaking, will purchase Gods glorious kingdome, and possesse them of it, without any *more a doe*. Which i^magination, is *more* blasphemous then ever came into a *Papists* apprehension, for as *grosse* as they are, in the matter of *merit*, yet they are not soe *foule*, as to say that *glory* may be gotten with soe *slight* desert, nay they exhort men to doe good works *besime*, and abundantly; I never read any of them that helde, heaven might be had for a few *bare words*, especially, proceeding from a minde, and soule, *more sicke*, then at the *pangs* of death the body can be.

And this *pestilent* conceit of prorogeuing time with God, is a vniverfall disease, and hath *slayne* many that are *gone*, and *infected* desperately millions of men that yet *line* in the christian worlde. Every one throwe's off the *day* of this duty, & breake's that commande-
ment

Exod. 22.
29, 30.

ment in the *substance*, which they were bound to ob-
serue in the *shadow*, where God saith [*Thou shalt not
delay to offer thy first fruits*] whether of *oxen, & cattell, of
liquor or any other thing.*

Delay, is a thing that the Lord still detested in any
thing that he had for vs to doe he would never endu-
re *protraction* of time; he hath ever pleaded with his
people for *haste*, and expedition, and for *priority* befo-
re all things yea, to be put in the *first place* before all
things, as well he doth deserue to be, in the conscien-
ce of the *corruptest* man among christians. And albeit,
that both these be soe, that the Lord hath soe *loved* to
be *first* seryed, and *loathed* in his soule to be set *behin-
de*, yet, as if prolonging, and poasting off the practise
of piety, were a thing that would rather make vs *accep-
table* to the Lord, then *detestable* in his sight: the diuill
(who is both Gods, and our *avowed* adversary herin)
doth not only perswade impious persons to stay, & *re-
joune* whatsoever is required of them in true religiō;
but also, he puts into their mindes, and mouthes what
to *plead* against God, & their owne *best good*, (but they
litle know it) in the truth of this point which we now
vrge, & arme's them to open their mouth with strange
insolency against heauen, to defend their *double* impie-
ty, in devising *damnable* shifts to support them therein,
that they may be still, and (for ever,) holden fast in the
cordes of their iniquity, and *linger* soe long in their
finfull courses, and accursed carriage, till *time* shalbe
no more, and it be too *late* to wish for the day of *grace*
the day of Gods *patience*, and our *repentance*, which
being now past & gone, we are to beare for ever, the
righteous vengeance of the wretched neglect of that
happy *opportunity*.

ABSLS OFFERING.

It is a sure thing that *Satan* never helpe's man to a *impious* bart to doe an euill, but he also help's him to an *incontinent* mounth to defend the sin he doth: and because his pretences are *such*, and doe seeme foe *plaus-Preten-*
ible, as that they doe misleade the most part of men in ces for
the worlde, let vs looke into them a litle, and *try* putting
whether they be *currant*, or *counterfeit*, *pure* or *base*, by of Gods
the truest *touch-stone*, even the word of God, which is service.
truth it self.

But before we come to any particularers, let vs *pre-*
mise a few words in generall to all such as doe plead any thing in this particular, to the end and purpose afore sayd; let them therefore know, and receive for a *memorandum* thus much.

That all that they speake is *against* God, and their owne eternall *good*: and that it is *for* the, *Devill* and his advantage to their owne everlasting *will*.

In all this *plea*, what are they? *Adversaries* to God, and themselves; and *Advocates* for the *Devell* against themselves. But let vs heare them speake, although, *all* they speake, be not worth the *bearing*.

They say (though God say the contrary, and themselves confesse it too) that though men should begin *besime*, and it were well if they would, yet there is no such *necessity* lying vpon it, that we should be foe *nice* vpon it: And why?

1. Because (*as they curfedly conceit*) a man may make *too much haste*, too much a doe, and what neede one be foe curious, & *precise*, at present, there is *time enough* (for these matters) heare-after.

This is their first *Plea*. Wherin, I must be holde to aske these men *first*, whether they speake (when they
E thus

Plea.

thus speake) as they thinke, or not. If not, what hel-
lish *hypocrisy* is it in any man to *belye* his owne *minde*,
with his owne *mouth*? what wofull impiety is it, to vtter
that (in *others* hearing) which a mans *owne* hart
doth contradict within himself? If they doe thinke
as they say (which I thinke every man would be well
advised before he would doe, if he knew *all*) then
let vs see if we can shew them, what *blasphemy* is wrap-
ped vp in this speach, inasmuch as the scope therof is
guilty of the fearfullest *fellony* that (almost) may be
committed.

Note.

God is *robbed* by them of his right, in the duty of
their owne, and the *first dayes* of such other, as they
doe *thus* delude. They are *robbed* by *Satan* (but with
their owne consent, for they plead for the *theife*) of
that right which Christ Iesus hath purchased for such
as are obedient to his truth.

Others also are *robbed* of the same good, by vttering
these yngodly sayings, to seduce them, sinfully to *seise*
off the time of their turning to the Lord. And I thin-
ke the man that knew this, would not be so *free* of
these words, which are soe *wofull* as we see, were
there noe more to be sayd against them.

The e-
vill of it

But let vs come neerer, and *pry* more narrowly
into this plea, and the further we goe, the more foule
abomination shall we finde, and detect therein, and
that in *divers* respects, a *few* wherof, we will notify be-
fore you.

I.
Evill.

This plea, supposeth an absolute *certainty* of
more time yet to come, and to be *remayning*,
vnto our lives: why should any man (in common
sence) say, it is *time enough* hereafter, if he were
not (as he thinks) *insulted* of more time to
come

come after-warde.

Now thus to surmize is grosse sin, inasmuch as the Lord hath taught vs to know, that we cannot expect much lesse *warrant*, one instant of time, or a moment more to breath in, then we doe already enjoy. Doth not the wise man tell vs, [*We know not what a day shall bring forth?*] Doth not the Apostle say as much for to morrow? [*you know not what shalbe to morrow?*] Was it not the *fooles* saying in the Gospell [*soule take thy ease, ease, drinke, and be merry, then hast enough in store for many yeeres*] loe, he dreamed of many *dayes*, *may yeares*, yea he presumed vpon *both*, when he had not *one day* more to live out of *hell*, fulfilling that of the Prophet. [*Destruction shall come vpon the wicked, and he shall not know the morning therof*] yet will these yngodly persons be presumeing of *more* time, and of time *enough*; hereafter. Noe, noe, we have not spent our time *past*, soe well, as that we may vndertake for *more* to come; had any man dealt with vs as we have dealt with God, I assure my self he should not live *a day* to an *end*, if we had power to *hang* him vp: the more wickedly doe they carry themselves against the Lord, who having *long since*, deserved to *hang* in hell fire, for not honoring him *heretofore*, dare yet say, there is time for that *hereafter*: as if we were *Gods*, to fore-see, & had fore-knowledg of future things; the which to arrogate, is extreame impiety. This is the *first*, but not the *worst*, of this plea, Let vs survey a second.

Tru. 27. 1.
Iam. 4. 14

2. This plea supposeth, nay presumeth, not only that there wilbe more time simply, but (which is more) more time of *grace*, more and better opportunity of repentance, & turning to God, then the *present* is.

2.
Evill.

And this is worse then the former, and much more egregious in the sight of God: for howsoever every dayes experience doth witnesse in the course of nature, and all things naturall, that haue life doe testify, that the Lord is pleased to bestow life & being vpon creatures, and that (amonge men) as well vpon the *unjust* as the *just*, the *infidell*, as the *faithfull*: Yet that together with this, time of *grace* should be presumed vpon, and taken for granted by any mortall man (that is willingly *gracelesse*), and thrusts off the call of God, and his heavenly *proffer* of the same; is a thing soe vnreasonable and sencelesse, soe sinfull and presumptuous, and an act of such *arrogancy* against the Lord, as he will severely *punish*, and noe way *cherish*, in the hart of man.

What? doth the naturall *sunne* in the firmament, & the *sunne* of *righteousnes*, keepe both one course every day and houre? are the *holy* and *precious* things of God that pertaine to our best being, & the *common* benefits of the earth, both at one *rate*? and to be had *alike* at all times? The *sunne* in the firmament hath beene *rarely* interrupted in her course; but the *sunne* of righteousness hath *many a time* beene *darkened* in diuers places, nay quite *removed* from some places: The former is for all *times* and *seasons*, the latter is for *seasons* only, not tyed to all *times*.

Therefore is the Lord still lying at vs and calling eagerly vpon vs, touching our *awaking* out of sin, and *bestowing* our selves to holynes, vpon this ground [And *that considering the season*] *For now the season is come. [This is the day of salvation, this is the acceptable season To day: if ye will beare.]* While it is called to day with many more of the like every day in the *yeare*, is not the

the day of *grace*, every *time*, not the *season* fit for this purpose.

The Lord is not tyed or bound in *duty*, to give vs *one* day, or *season*, but if in *mercy* he please to offer some *few*, no men may looke for *many*; this gate is not *ever open* to every one, it is *often shut*, nay, it is *ever shut* *Mat. 23.* to all such as were not ready to goe in, when it was *open*. Gods *calender* and *ours* differ much, our *dayes* are *constant*, we can certainly foresee a *yeare* (or more) before vs, when such a time will come; it is *not soe* here, the Lords *almanacke* gives noe such light or foresight, his *happy times*, are hid from their eyes who were shewed them long *since*, but would not *then*, and shall not *now*, see them. Well may a sinfull wretch finde some *saints dayes* there; that is, to his confusion, he may looke vpon the blessed seasons, they have made vse of, to give themselves to the Lord, but his *owne dayes* he can finde none, but such as be *past*, and all written in *red letters*, in letters of *blood*, for his blood is vpon *him self*, who hath neglected soe great saluation, in the *season* therof, and let the worke of God alone, till it be too late to goe about it. But let vs yet see something further, what more will follow hence.

3. This plea is yet more foule in this *third*, then in *both* the former: for why? it doth not only presume vpon *time*, and vpon time of *grace*, (and *both* without God); but more, it presumeth to *dispose* this time, and to order it to repentance at *our pleasure*.

And herein, what doe we? (surely we are not well advised, in it) is not this to vsurpe Gods place and prerogative?

3.
Evill.

We

We make our selves *masters* of the time, and of that which is to be done therin, as if we might not only take the time *when we will*, but also doe therin *what we will*, and as if it were now in our *power*, and at our *pleasure*, to give our selves to God when we thinke good. Which apprehensions are most *proud* in vs, and most *unpleasing* to him, being apparantly *prejudiciall*, to his wisdom and providence wherby all our *dayes*, and all our *wayes* are ordered.

In his *goodnes* we live and move *naturally*: in his *mercy* we live and move *spiritually*: in his *power* & assistance, we doe any thing we ought that is *heavenly*: and shall we arrogate *all three* to our selves, without any colour of ground or reason, and take these things soe *highly*, (or rather soe *bellishly*) vpon vs, as if we were *equall* with God, yea, *above* him, rather, to dispose *that time* to our selves, and in *that time*, to dispose our selves to *that* service, which (for our owne former contempt) the Lord doth, and wil, deny vs in *both*: that neither we shall have time to *breath*, or if we have, that yet no *breath* of spirituall life shalbe in vs, to move towards any thing that is acceptable in his sight.

Our *bessers* have had better mindes, who have confessed that without him, we could be *nothing*; without him, we could *have nothing*; without him, we could *doe nothing*: and vpon these thoughts, have cast all good things vpon his *wisdom* to dispose, his *power* to bring to passe, his loving *kindnes* and favour to encrease, and encourage in vs; acknowledging both *themselves*, and their *times* to be in his hands. It would well become *these* that thus plead, to practise the same; which because they doe nor, we see what impiety they incurre herin; yet is not this *all*, more remayneth.

4. This plea of *time enough* hereafter, & of making *too much hast*, yet, argueth that these persons doe thinke these *two things* to be true.

1. that God may be served *too long*.

2. that the Divell may be served *too litle*.

Both which doe as naturally flow from their *saule*, and *impure* mouthes, as water from a fountayne; for wherto *els* can their sayings tende, seing (as we sayd before) either God, or the Divell, must be served of vs at all times, and *untill* we have sacrificed our selves to the Lord, the Divell hath *all* our dayes.

And may we thinke that heaven *can*, or *will*, heare, and beare, the hydeous *blasphemy* of both these, or either of them? what? may we serve the Lord *too soone*? and, *too soone* give over the service of *Satan*? is the divell become the better *master*, and God the *worse*, that our *last time*, may serve his turne, and all the *rest*, litle enough for the other? who hath heard such things among the *heathens*, or such speeches as doe, as directly, and plainly inferre and conclude them, as if they did speake them? How vnreasonable, how irreligious, are both? nay, how execrable is either of the *two* by it self? the one *applaudes* the Divell *aboue* God, the other *abases* the Lord *below* the divell, *will* either; *can* both be *sufured*? were not the *patience* of the almighty *infinite*, these sinners would sink into *hell*, yea, into the *nerthermost hell*, but let them know; *forbearance* is no *acquittance*; he that *doth endure this* foe long, will in the end avenge it, with the heaviest justice and wrath, that is

revealed from heaven, or
reserved in hell

as against all other, *for* especially, against this *mighty*
vngodlines

4.
Evill.

vngodlines of men, then which what can be more *monstrous* or provoking, to draw swift damnation vpon their soules that *thus* speake: for what can be spoken to the *greatest disgrace* of him that is *most* glorious, if this be not? and can we once *surmise*, that the Lord will suffer such indignity and disparagemet at our hands & not power out his indignation vpon vs? Especially, if withall, we well consider, our *owne* injury we doe our *selves*, besides this impiety against the Lord: because the *lesse* service we doe the Lord, and the *more* we doe the diuell, the more wofull is it for vs, in both *respects*: for that *little* we would give God is *rejected*, and *all* that we doe for *Satan* is *plagued*, and so by *both*, we are wrapt vnder the eternall wrath of his dreadfull majesty.

Thus and no *better*, then we have sayd, but much *worse*, then we *can* say, is the sequell of this first pernicious *apologie*, which men make against God, and their owne soules, in the *procrastination* of the power, and practise of this truth. Now if a man should summe vp all these together, would not the *total*, be *terrible* (thinke you) to the soule that is guilty in the *items*?

to assure our selves of more *time of life*,

to presume that some of *that*, shall be *time of grace*.

to take vpon vs to dispose of that time, what *we will* doe therin.

to imagine God may have too *much*, and the diuell too *little*, of our service.

Is any *one* of these answerable before God? much lesse are they *all* excusable: noe noe, every of them is *high treason* against

his *honour*, who order's *all time*.

his

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his *favour* who gives all time of *grace*:
his excellency and *worthines*, who deserves the
duty of all our dayes.

These words must be *eaten*, and *recalled*, and that
with more then ordinary humiliation, greife, and dete-
station, or nothing can remayne but his just vengean-
ce vpon the transgressors; it is most true of *this plea*,
which *Solomon* spake of *Adoniah*s desire, that [*he had spo-*
ken this word against his owne life], and was therevpon
instantly slayne: and soe might *they* be, who have spo-
ken these words against their owne *eternall life*: and
if the Lord should now seize vpon them to everlasting
death, how righteous were it vpon these vngodly
wretches against whome the Apostle *Iude* saith, the
Lord will come in great glory, and dreadfull power,
even (among other things) [*for their hard and cursed*
speaking] of which number, who can imagine that *these*
are not *what neede such hast? there is time enough bea-*
reaster for these matters: wofull man, that vtterest *those*
words; is there soe litle neede that God should have
his *glory*, that *thou* shouldst (by giving it) be truly happy?
if thy *whole* time were given to God, were it *enough*?
nay can *any time* be enough for his duty? suppose *one*
man might live from one *end* of the world to the *other*,
from the *first* day to the *last* of all time, to see both
the *creation* and *consummation* of all things, yea, and
admir that man could live without *sin* too, and not
miscarry one *moment*, but be evermore doing that
which might honour God? could *this man* say he had
given God *enough*? I trow not: for *what* time can be
(in equity) enough for him, whose *last* glory to his
saints shall be infinite, and eternall *beyond all time*? and
yet these accursed mouthes, dare stint the Lord to the

1. King. 1.
23.

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last, and least, and worst, time of their life, and thinke it enough to. The Lord deliver vs (saith the apostle) from [unreasonable and wicked men,] which if these be not, who are, or can be?

Oh then, let vs *revoke, recant, and cancell* presently, what we have spoken *wickedly*; by that tongue that vttered them, *smite* that hart that thought them; *accuse* and execerate that diuell that suggested them; least our not revoking of them, *rende vs* from God, *send vs* to *Satan*, the author of them. Let vs lay our hands vpon our mouthes and resolve never to open them againe to such impious purpose, wherein,

the Lord of heaven is *damnsified*:

the soules of men are *damned*:

the diuell only is *advantaged*.

God is dishonoured, we are vndone, the diuell goe's away with *all* the *gaines* from *both*; which he could never doe, if he could not thus *line* the *lips*, and *tip* the *tongues* of some prophane persons, to become his *trumpets*, to gather men to *damnation*, by such *delusions*.

This is the *first* infernal plea, that is devised, and urged to deceive the Lord of his *first* *fruits* of our time, but have they done? when they have sayd thus? noe they have, yet, a *second* pretence, and a *third* too, to come. Let vs examine the former.

2.
Pretence.

1. They plead, that in *age*, this worke may be done *well* enough; and *time* enough, then men are stayed and know what they doe, is it not fit for young *glady* heads to meddle with such matters.

Then there wilbe more leasure, when those dayes come, wherein men have given over the profits, pleasures,

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fures, and vanities, of the world, and have nothing to doe, but to goe to church, and serve God: This they pretend.

Well, but though in the *former* there was *much*, in this *latter* there is much *more* presumption: we will try it, & then we shall see it, in the particulars; which are the apparant consequents of this pretence, which (vpon due search) we shall finde, not to be soe *seemingly plausible*, as they are *really pernicious*, & damnable.

The Evills of it.

1. It doth directly *contradict* the Lord in that which he saith, for he will have the *first* of our dayes (as we have heard,) these say, *no*, it is not fit for young heads to intermeddle.

1.
Evill.

Is not this to give God the *lye*, yea to make him a *lyar*, who will (therefore) have the *first* because they are *first* for him? is not this to charge *folly* vpon him that is only *wise*? as if he had not wisdom enough to chuse *that part* of our dayes for his duty, wherein we are most meete to doe it, but we will take it vpon vs, to be *wiser* then *he*, and assigne him a *season*, better suiting this busines.

He saith he will have our *first*, we will give the *last* time to him: doth not this inferre, that he is farre *wyde* of the marke, and wonderfully *over-seene*, and that we only are in the *right*?

So then these *two*, to make the most true and wise God (I tremble to utter it) a *foole*, and a *lyar*, these *two* I say, doe make vp the *first* impiety, of this *second* plea: the vengeance & justice due to *either* of which, (much more to *both*) is beyond myne, (or any creatures) ability, to expresse.

2. This presumeth vpon *olde age*, and make's no

2.
Evill,

question to live to see those dayes and yeares wherein men are *soe* accounted.

And this thwarteth all Gods truth touching the *uncertainty*, and *shortnes* of mans life, *soe* often taught vs every where; *npe*, the lives of *these* men must be *no* vanities, *dreames*, or *vapours*; nor compared to windes, to smoake, to nothings; they are during and permanent for 60, 70, or more yeares. Howbeit, how many have not lived so many *houres*, as they dreamed *yeares*, nor *soe* many *dayes*, as they accounted *stores*? the sun hath shyned clearly vpon some in the *morning*, who were become *carcasses*, er'e the *evening*: and others have scene it set in the *evening*, whose eyes were sunke er'e *morning*, and yet they thought themselves as *likely* to live, as long lyed, as any that thus speake. Even *moments* have swept away *millions* of other men, yet *these* must live many yeares, at least, to be olde, (how, or when, should God have them, *els*) and as if God himselfe were *bounde*, and had *bounde* all his creatures to their *good behavjour*, that they must be saved harmelesse from any meanes of *short* life, or *sudden* death, either they must be *aged*, or God must not have *them*: and sure, I am perswaded he is most willing to *save* them. But of this presumption we sayd something *before*, therefore the lesse shall serve *here*.

3.
Evill.

3. Admit you might live to age, and were sure, not to dye till you were very olde, are you sure either to *have* a *hart* to *give* your selfe to God *then*, or that God hath a *hart* to *take* you *then*.

Assuredly (if it be well look't into) there is *no reason* for either, but very *much* against both: for why? consider *first*, for our owne harts: what *apines*, what *ability*, nay what *possibility* will, or can, there be in vs, vnto good, who have beene soak't, and steep't many yeares

In all sin and impiety; what holynes? what purity? in those *parts* of our *bodjes*, and *powers* of our *soules*, which hell hath poysoned and envenomed all our dayes, & are now full of deadly poyson, the hart *hardened*, the conscience *unconvinced*, the judgment *blinded*, the affections *earthly*, the will *rebellious*, all, *benumbed*, and vtterly voyd of any *sparke* of that *quickening spirit*, which must turne a man to God: wherwith will ye come to the Lord? if you pray, it must be with a mouth *furr'd* with blasphemy, with a minde *fraught* with all other impiety, whereto you have beene affected? what will yee *give him*, but a soule, and a body that have both combyned to be *rebells* your whole life, against him, and is there any *power* in *these* to be given to the Lord, who have *sold* themselves like *Abah*, to sin, and whome the Divell (*the true owner now*) will come, & *clayme* as his *owne*, long since due *unto him*, & therefore will not edure they should be givē to any other *from him*.

It is against all humane reason, and common sence, that a man *soe* *joyned* to sin, *soe* accustomed and *habituated* to corruption, who hath consumed his dayes in nothing but in dishonouring & disobeying the Lord, and *never knew* what belonged to the *favour* of saving grace, or to the *beginning* of any god worke, should now be able to *begin* and finish, that *great worke* of giving himself vp to God, and that *at* and *in*, his owne *set time*. Noe, there goe's more to it then *soe*: it is no such *short worke*, no mā can be *soe quick* at it, especially, *those* that have beene so *slow* all their dayes before: it will aske *longer time*, and *more* a doe, before it be wel *begun*, then these *spots* doe conceit, doth belong to the *middle*, and *both ends* of it.

God sayth that no man can come to him *except he be drawne*; these men (it seemes) will come to

God, *Whether he will or noe*, as if it were in their power to draw God to themselves; but as he will not have his goodnes, and power soe much *abused*, as to be *drawne* to them; soe neither, wil he endure, to have their rebellious and debauched life so much *honoured*, as now at last cast, to draw them to him: but even let him alone with them, who hath had their *childehood*, and *youth*, to take their *age* too, and soe to have all to himself. *Cusfomary sin* is not soe lightly cast off, it is bred in the *bone*, it will not be easy to get it out of the *flesh*, and that soe, as Gods *spirit* may instantly enter, as these doe most idly apprehend.

Againe consider the *second*, what *hurt can God have* to accept of the divells *reversion*, or the *leavings* of our lives? the *doteage*, the *dog-dayes* (as it were) of all the time we live. Let *olde age* be well considered, and the state therof pondered, in our *selves*, and all other *creatures* that serve vs: is it not the *only time*, wherein we cast off, our *servants*, or *castell*, to *base* vses, as being vnfit for *ours*? An *olde servingman*, now *overworne* and decrepite, and not fitt to attend his *Lord* any longer, ha's a license to keepe an *ale-house*, or become's some *tapster*, and soe is made servile to every *base* *pot-companion*; An *olde horse*, of good *pace*, of great *price*, before, for the *saddle*, the *coach*, now to the *myll*, to the *barrow*, to any meane *drudgery*, and at last, to the *dogs*. And can *this age*, wherein *one man* is not fit for *another's* service, nor any *beast* for *manys* use, be the *meetest time* for the most high, to be served in of vs? what shall we then thinke to become *his*, when we are a burden to the *World*, and to our *selves*, and both *weary* of one another as *Barzillai* spake to *David*, of himself?

What man would be soe vsed by his *beast*, as these men

men (more vnreasonable then *beasts*, herin) would vse God: Admitt a manns beast (like *Balam's asse*) could speake, if he should say to his *master* (as these doe to the *almighty*.) While I am *yonge* and *strong*, I must follow my pleasure, you must give me leave till my *olde dayes*, and then I wilbe *yours* to command, and give my self wholly to *your service*. What would the owner answer, thinke you? would he yeeld to his *beast*, & thinke well of the motion, and take him home to house, and make *much of him*, when he were *aged*, and *diseased*, and both vnfit, and vnable, to doe busines; surely noe; if he could not be *broken*, and brought to worke before, he should be *beaten out* now, though he did offer himself. And must God take that from vs, which we will not endure from *beasts*? the *last*, the *worst*, the *dregs*, and *refuse* of our dayes, must they fall to *his share*? the *only unfit time* for any thing, must that be *his only time*, and *all* he shall have at our hands? Can we hope of acceptation and entertaynement in *heaven*, then, when, *men* refuse, and the *world* refuse's our service?

Wofull men, who hath bewitched you, that you should not beleue the truth? Even *Satan*, who because he would have you wholly *his owne*, doth therefore witholde you from being Gods, till you be *unable* to honour him, and it be *impossible*, he should receive you; it is *he* that doth abuse you herin, he knowe's, it is with *men* in respect of God, as with *beasts* in respect of *men*, in their aged dayes they are more fit for *slaughter*, then for *service*, so *olde men* (who have deferred their duty) are *now* more like to be *adjudged* of God, for neglecting it in time *past*, then *accepted* for time to come.

What

What doth not every, thing weare, & grow *worse* with age? all *olde* things are accounted litle worth: *olde* clothes to put on; *olde* houses to dwell in; & the same we might say of all other things in their kinde, no man care's for, or regared's any such. But this is *wonderfull*, that men who see, that the *fruit of our sin* in other creatures make's them vnserviceable to vs, yee see not, *sin* is selfe abiding, and encreasing in vs, (for soe long time) should make vs *see* to God. *Time, use, age*, doth corrupt all other things to vs, but *sin*, (the only venime and poyson of all things) make's men (by this reckoning) most *fit* for God, for the *only time* they chuse for him is, when sin hath had his greatest *sway*, all their lives before: as if the corruption of our nature, and life, had noe power at all, to *enfeeble*, or vnfit vs, for our God. Is not sin our spirituall sicknes, and the only *desperate disease* of our whole man? hath it not a *corroding* quality, to eate *quite through* all the parts of our bodyes, all the *powers* of our soules, to pollute, infect, and annoy vs, in all respects? and who (I pray you) would entertayne, an *aged, diseased, and infected* man into his house, as more fit for his turne *now*, then in his former times, when he was *free* from these contagious maladies? thinke, (by your owne reason) *what* *harm* the Lord of heaven can have, to take in these *late commers*, being in farre *worse case*, to serve him, then the *most* disabled man, may be to attend a *Prince*.

Now then, if we see reason to conceive, (as we cannot but doe, if the Lord enlighten our eyes) that our wilfull, and wofull *deferring* of our duty till our *olde* dayes, doth deprive vs of *harm* to goe vnfaynedly to God, and debarre him from having a *hart*, graciously to accept of vs, then this *plea* is pernicious to vs, and

we (now we know it) most impious in vrging it, as we have done. But let vs come to the *fourth* & last, plea; for this proroguation, of piety.

4. It is pleaded, that there is mercy with God at any time, even at the *last cast*; as the theife on the crosse did well finde, and soe shall we, *we hope*, why should we not, even at our *last breath*. 4.
Plea.

This pretence is put vpon vs *daily*; vpon all occasions we heare of it, at *all times* it is layd in our dish, to *bolster* vp rebellion against God, and to *barre* repentance vnto life. Noe word of God soe much abused, no worke of God *more*. This president of the Lords *extraordinary* mercy, is made the *ordinary* packhorse to carry all mens impiety: and seing he was pleased to be soe gracious to *one*, he shall sere the worse with *many*, for *millions* of men doe builde their *gracelesnes*, vpon this *grace* of his.

But because we finde by pitifull experience, that this *holy* worde, and this *holy* worke of God, (both being right worthy, to be thought vpon with all the admiration, and honor of our *parts*) is become the commo *haskney* wheron every *bell-bownde* rides poast, to his owne perdition, and as he goe's *kicks* and *winces*, at Gods long suffering, and loving kindnes: I will therefore endeavour the vttermoſt that I am albe, to see if *some* may yet be *recalled*, that are gone farre, and *others* may be *Hayd*, that are comming after, and *some* *prevented*, that are setting out, to run this reprobate race.

Vndoubtedly, did men deliberate at all, or could any *wise consideration* enter into their soule's, they could not thus *plead*, they would not produce, this *rare* and *matchlesse* example of fauour and grace, to support
G their

2. *Tet.* 3.
16.
2. *Cor.* 4.
3.4.

their owne vngodly prophanes & impiety. Yea, and to adde *another* euill to *all* the rest, in the very vse and vrging of it; to wit, to *peruers* and abuse the sacred word of God, and to *abuse*, and *prostitute* this glorious worke of his; either of *which*, whosoever doth, he doeth it *to his owne destruction*, he destroyes himself in the very deede, if the *apostle* say true in one place; and in another *too*, where he tell's vs, that *if the Gospell be bid* (and soe it is to them, that *can see* to doe nothing with it, but to abuse it) *it is hid to them that are lost*, who are *hudwinckt* by the diuell, that they discern not the true sence, & vse of the same, but vrge it, & argue from it, to such ends, as God doth *abhorre*, that now his word must *wounde* himself, and nothing shall be made such an occasion of his *dishonour*, as that which he *once* did, to *renowne* himselfe, and the *glory* of his goodnes, and fauour for ever. And how doe we vils of it imagine the Lord will take it, that his *owne selfe* should be thus mistaken, as to be made *weapons*, against his owne *maiesty*, which he ordayned to destroy our *impiety*. Doubtlesse, that theise, that malefactor, never did halfe the *robbery*, or any *villany comparable* to that which these men doe, who thus abuse his example, to wrong the Lord, and their owne soules (and the soules of others) soe *unspeakably* as they doe. And that they may see and vnderstand, (as they shall, if the Lord haue a purpose to save them,) we will craue your patience and attention, to open in particular, the heavy and hydeous evils, that are committed when this instance of Gods grace, is soe *aledged*.

1.
Evill.

This is to make that *common* and *ordinary*, which God hath made *peculiar*, and *extraordinary*.

ABELS OFFERING.

Is it not thus? observe, and you shall see: what the Lord did at *one time* only and never before, nor since, (that we read off,) to *one man* only, & not to any other but he, (for a *second example* of such favour is not to be found in all the revealed will of God;) and vpon a *cause*, and consideration which shall never be seene againe, Christ being but *once offered* for vs. This doth every man vrge as his owne at *all times*, and in *all cases*, without *all* consideration of these perticulers before mentioned.

Is not this to *eclipse*, nay to *cancel*, the glory of the living God? and to cast this most precious *pearle* before all swyne, and trample this most *holy thing* vnder the feete of every prophane person, that the greatest *riches* of his grace should be reached out to the veryest *wretches* in the world, who build nothing but *contempt* vpon this loving kindnes of the Lord? If it be such a wofull thing to *darken* the *counsell* of God by words *without* knowledge (as it is sayd in *Iob*?) must it not needes be a thing more damnable, to *darken* the *kindnes* of God, with words *against* knowledge, as these cannot but be, to every one of those that *thus* abuse them?

Again what an *absurd*, *senselesse* & *sinfull* collection were *this*, or the like. *Once*, *Balaams* asse did speake, therefore every *asse*, should expect to doe the same. *Once* the *sea* went back, and the water stood vpright as a *wall* on either hand to *Israel*, therefore every man might looke for the like passage: I thinke they that presumed vpon it, and followed after them, found it not soe.

Once, God sent *manna*, and *Quayles* from heaven, and

Note?

water out of a rock. why should any man care to get meate or drinke, he may hope to have the same meanes to feede him.

Once, Naaman washed in Iorden and was cleane: Once, men were throwne into a fiery oven, and not burnt; Once, a bush did burne and not consume; Once, Christ smote all his enemyes downe with a word or two. Why doe's not all the world depēd vpon these perticulers, and resolve to be releived in the same miseries, by the same meanes? It were a thing soone done, to deliver a multitude more of the like instances, wherin and from every of which, we might argue as warrantably, as from *this* of the *theife*. But the world is wise enough, not to be soe *befooled*, in these things that belong to the body, they can see, and say, these were all extraordinary, & miraculous &, not to be looked for againe: And are ye not *blinded* by the prince of *darknes* (yee sinfull soules) that yee should not *more clearly* see the same, in this that concern's soule and body too, and the eternall state of both? Is there absurdity in *thase*, & sence in *this*? doe those instances seeme extraordinary, and may this seeme soe *common*? cannot you hope to have the benefit of *those*, being miraculous, and must *this* be for all men, which is *matchlesse*? Vndoubtedly, either you must looke on them all *alike*, with a single eye, and discern them to be *equally impossible*; or acknowledge that eye to be *sinfull*, which can see *odds* in things of the same kinde and nature, especially, *such odds* as shall give God the honour of his favour and power in the *one*, and *rob* him of *both* in the other.

But the *spectacles* wherewith they thus see, are *Satans*, he make's them, and putts them on, and trache's them

to looke thus *askint*, on the things of God; If for too-
de, for phylike; for passage over sea, for victory over
enemies, or any such things we should thus reason,
the world would *laſſe* at vs, as most *wisles* fooles, nay
our owne *bellyes*, our *bodies*, our *dangers*, would teach
vs to doe better, he must *famish* that gapes for *quailes*
out of the cloudes, and he must *perish* that looke's for
Naamans cure, & he have his *throat cut*, that waites to
have all his enemies layd flat with a *word*: men will say
there is no proportiō of reason in these things, & the
same doth the *Lord* (and the truth of his religion) say,
in this instance, if thou hadst an *care* opened, a *minde*
sanctified, to heare and see it; as litle reason would
appeare in *this one*, as in *all the other*, & thou wouldst
as plainly see the jnevitabile perdition of thy self, in
foule and body *here*, as in any of those things named
there.

Doe but consider well, whither this doe not spo-
yle, & vtterly make voyd, the verry *marrow*, and *pish*,
the *sap*, and *joyce* of Gods sacred word; I meane the
true *application* of the same, wherein consisteth the
life, and *vertue*, of all that God reveale's, and he that
shall dare

either to *abridge*

or, to *enlarge*

this, that it either fall *short* of Gods boundes, or
doe *exceede* them, shall finde heavy (yet just) measure
at Gods hands.

The everlasting rule, and expresse *canon* of the
scripture is this [That *which* God hath *sanctified*, doe not
then make common] this is Gods mynde, that things be
not made otherwise then he *means* them, that every
thing be *let* alone, as he *left* it, and not once *meddled*
withall,

Act. 10. 12

withall, to any other ende. Who is he that shall now against the clearest light of knowledge and conscience, *violare*, this absolute law of the eternall God? But doth not every soule doe soe, that *urge*'s this word of God, and suffers *Satan* to be his interpreter vpon it, receiving his *glosse*, and embracing the diuells commenta-ry vpon Gods text.

He it is, that make's this *pearle*, (even this *peerlesse*, and *pricelesse* pearle,) as ordinary as any *pubble stone* that lyes in the high way. I call it a *pearle*, and I account it no lesse then *peerlesse*, because it cannot be *paralleled*, in any place, but was a *president* of wonderfull *peculiarity* in all respects, as namely.

to the *party* by whome.

to the *parties* before whome.

to the *party* to whome; it was done.

For the *first*, to wit the *party by whome*, it was peculiar to Iesus Christ, who was God, & so could give grace, and forgive sin, and convert a man in one moment, fully and extraordinarily: I thinke it would trouble the whole world, to finde an *insoluble* instance, that ever ordinary minister, or any *meere man*, hath done as much.

For the *second*, it was peculiar to the *parties before whome*, that the adversaries, and exceptioners of the Lord Iesus, might see the power of his *diuinity* shynning (at this time) through all the reproach, and misery of his *humanity*: and soe be convinced (as some of them were) that he was the true *messias*, and son of God, able to goe himself (at that time) to *heaven*, and carry *hell* with him, by the *virtue* that was in him.

For the *third*, it was peculiar to the *party to whome* it was done, & that in regard of his rare, and extraordinary

inary *repentance*, expressed in many particulars: the *suddaine* chang of his *hair*, and *tongue* (for *he*, as well as his fellow, did *at first* blaspheme Christ) now he rebuke's him, and condemnes both himselfe and his fellow *justly*; the excellent *confession* he made of Christ before them all, & that *now*, when he was vpon the *torture*, where he could also, (not withstanding *all paynes*) pray *instantly*; Did ever any barren dry *tree*, beare soe much fruit in an *instant* by any ordinary course? The fig tree was very strangely and *miraculously* cursed, which *so soone* withered with a word of Christ mouth; and was not *this tree* miraculously blessed, which *so soone* did yeeld such abundance? nay, was it not a greater, even a *double miracle*, that such a *bramble* such a *rebell*, should become an *olive*, and beare plentifully the first day, & houre, of his being soe?

Now then if all this be thus, that in each of these, and diuers other instances, this particuler were soe *peculiar*, and *extraordinary*, what is it that any wicked man nay conclude *hence* for himself; more then *this*, (and *note it well*, thou godles, and gracelesse person, as thou readest it.) *That when Iesus Christ shall come againe in the flesh, and fall into the hands of men to be crucified, and that two other must be hangd on either side of him, & it come to thy turne to be one of those two, & the better of the twayne that hang's by him, vpon whome he will shew his diety to convert thee miraculously, & vnto whome againe, thou shewest the fruits of repentance extraordinarily, then, mayst thou be assured to speede as this cheife did.*

Note
well.

Other *warrantize* I can give none, vpon any other tearmes then *these*, in any *common case*: howsoever it is most true, that there want not *evidences*, nor *experiences*,

riences, at any such time as the Lord shall please to exercise his speciall patience, and grace ; yet, by *ver- tue* of this example, or president, (every way *this* extraordinary) no such matter can be *concluded*, as most men would make of it : To delay what is due to the Lord, and to rejourne what he commands, hath no *colour* of ground or reason here , to doe soe is more then this *sheife* himself did, who having (in all likelyhood) lived all his *life* without God, or any meanes of good, doth *now* come at the *first* call : which is more then *thou* hast done, nay *thou* being daily called vpon , by the Lord, doest poast off thy comming to him , by *his* example ; that came *assoon* as he was called : & if thou doe *Worse* then he, doe st hope to fare *as Well* ? nay rather , how righteously may the just God take *this* allegation out of thy mouth , and *retort* it vpon thee , who pleadest the putting off , of thy service to the Lord , by his pretence, that made more then *ordinary* haste to come to Iesus Christ, and went *so fast*, towards him , that he got to heaven, *the same day*, with him.

Beholde now wherevnto it is come, that every vngodly man (that presse's this president to this purpose) is condemned out of his owne mouth , and the mouth of iniquity is *stopped* by that *very* evidence, whereby it did *open* it self against heaven. And this is the *first* of the mischeifes that ariseth from the misaledding of this example, when men will soe *unreasonably* and without *all sense*, presse , and plead, the *last* fruits of Christs mercy to *one* malefactor , to prevent the *first* fruits of that duty, that all men owe to God their creator ; and make that *ordinary* to *every one* , which he was pleased to impropriate but *once*, and but to *one* alone. And if they be soe *deepe* at the first *step* , let vs
looke

Note.

looke a litle further how in going forward this way, they plunge themselves past all recovery into perdition,

2. The *perverse*; & *perverted* pressing of this *theses* particuler, to that end which vngodly men vrge it, doth breede most evident and irreconcilable *contradictions* in the scriptures, & make *bare*, betweene *one* part of Gods blessed word and *another*.

2.
Evill

And he that doth thus, (if he did know what he doth) doubtlesse, would looke well about him ere he would offer it: For why? to set the scripture together by the eares, what is it? Is it not (as was observed before) to make God (who is truth it self, and whose word it is) a *lyar*, for if one peice be contrary to another, all cannot be true and sounde? Is it not to expose the sacred booke of God to *contempt*, in taking from it that incommunicable property, and *prerogative royall*, that it hath above all bookes vnder heaven, to be ever more at absolute *unity* within it self, and making it like humane writings which are full of *error*, and *falsehood*? Is it not to make *our preaching* wayne, and *your faith* wayne, and to keepe you *still* in your sins? for if the *ground* wher vpon we preach, and you *believe*, be vnfounde, and not such absolute truth, as may beare vp *both*, then is *neither* to any purpose? Nay, is it not to bring all to vtter and remediles *confusion*, by shaking Gods foundation, and overthrowing the whole frame of his blessed building, vpon this infallible truth of his owne, one *stile* wherof, if it should be *false*, *noe* worde of all the rest, would be thought *true*, and for these (like those *pagani*) doe their best, to *turne the truth of God into a lyar*.

Rom. 1. 26

H

Now

Now is not the *abusive* vrging of this scripture, a setting of one word of God *against* another? let vs weigh it well, and we will *see* it, and *say* it also. For why? It is a ruled case, and past all question, (as we have proved) that God will have the *first fruits* of vs all, we have made Gods minde vndeniably manifest for *that*, now if *that* be *soe*, is not the allegation of this example, as *manifest* a contradiction of this *truth* as may be; for why doe men stand vpon this scripture? why is it *soe* often vrged and iterated? why are we replyed vpon, when we reprove mens impiety, and have this evermore cast in our *dish*, from day to day? Is it not to plead for *prolongation* of piety till hereafter? doe's it not make men say (through their owne impiety) that it is *too soone* yet? It is not *yet* *time*, there is *time enough* for these things in *time to come*? *God* *summe*

Are not these words made the only *refuge* of all *rebellions* against God, and a *counterpoysen* to that *early*, and *timely* duty, that we owe vnto him? doe not men think they haue *stop'd* our *mouthes*, and *satisfied* their owne *minde* sufficiently, when they have *thus* spoken, and *done* enough, to *undo* all, that we can say to the contrary.

And I pray you what call you this, but *contradiction*, when you oppose, & set this *one* word of God, against all the words of God spoken elsewhere; when he *soe* often call's for the *first fruits*, you will *speake* all, with that fauour which *wisdomes* shewed to one man, at the *last*. This is to *confute* one peice of scripture by another: to overthrow Gods *words*, by Gods *worke*, and *soe* to divide God against God, as *Satan* against *Satan*, to make the Lord say a thing, in one place, and in another to *vn*say it: and (*finally*) to draw from the Lord himself

himself a *dispensation*, and liberty of sinning, that soe what he requires in soe many places of his *law*, he shoulde release, and cancell in *one* part of his *Gospel*.

Let any man whome God hath endued with any measure of *sound* vnderstanding, judge whether this be not to make a *rent* in the Lords revealed wil; and if soe it be, it is time for vs *to judge our selves*; for soe doing, for before the Lord will endure this, the soule that doth it, shalbe *rent* from him, & throwne among *reprobates*; the judgment and damnation of these *disgracers* of God, and *depravers* of his holy word, sleepeeth not; and there is noe way to shun, or escape it, but by a *through* judging of your selves, in respect of this impiety, which if they doe not, whose *mouthes* have spoken it, and whose *myndes* have thought it, vengeance shall surely overtake them, even *that vengeance*, which is due to such as doe this insufferable *indignity*, to God, and his word.

This is the 2. *Step* they tread, who follow this way, & we see it sink's *deeper* then the former, toward that dreadfull confusion which cannot be ayoyed, if this fearfull evill be not abandoned. Let vs yet see further, to the *third*.

3. the producing, and aleading of this president of the theise *ibow*, (that we may *play the shejnes* with God, and *rob him* of his first fruits,) doth breede, and ingender many soule falshoods, and *will* blasphemyes in our harts.

He that propoeth this president for his *apologie*, against the manifest light of truth we have proved, maketh this scripture, the *passage* of such *asbesticall* principles as, are to be *abhorred* in the *thoughts* of every man, and not to be once *withered* of any. Let vs see

some few of those many monstrous vntruths which we might mention.

3.
Evill,

1. it doth possesse vs with a perswasion that by *authority* of scripture we may rejourne the obedience that *long since* we owed vnto the Lord.

Whereas the holy ghost is clearly opposite here- vnto: God calleth for nothing more (as we have heard) then the *first*, and condemneth nothing more then putting off what he command's. His servants, (such as he hath *effectually* called) have made all the haste and expedition that was possible: So saith Da-

Psal. 119.

32. 60.

Al. 10.

33.

Gal. 1. 16.

vid [I will run the way of thy commandements] and againe *[I made haste and delayed not to keepe thy righteous judgments]* So saith Cornelius to Peter *[Then I sent for thee immediately]* and Paul saith the same of himself *[immediately I consulted not with flesh and blood &c.]* The evidence of God, to hasten our duty is *undentable*: the sin of not doing soe, is *in excusable*: yet by these mens argumēt's the same God that is soe eager for *expedition*, doth warrāt our *delay*. And can any thing be more false thē that God should abet these two contraries.

4.
Evill,

2. it doth patronage not only *delay*, but *presumptuous* delay, such, as men are guilty of by presuming *(against all good ground)* they shall finde the same measure of mercy that this *theife* did.

Now to presume of pardon for a sin of *presumption*, is to presume of more fauour then the *theife* found, for, (for ought we know) his sin was not of presumption but either of *mere ignorance* if he were a *fool*, (as some suppose him & his fellow to bee) or of *grosse ignorance* if he were a *lew*. Sure it is he knew not *Christ*, for he *revelled* him at the first as well as the other. And must you (by his example) presume of delay in Gods duties, which he never *meant*, and of mercy for pre-

sumptuous delay which this *theife* never found? shall God become the *prop* of our presumption, when it is a sin that his soule hate's, and he is soe farre from having any mercy in *store* for it, that he hath not greater *store* of justice heaped vp, scarce against any vngodlynes; & they that be faulty are sayd to *store*, or *treasure* up *wrath*, against the day of *wrath*, that is, every day to augment, enlarge, and adde vnto their owne damnation. *Rg. 2. 5.*

This impiety is *next neighbour* to that which is *unpardonable*, if once a man be soe impudent that he dares offend *presumptuously*, he had neede bethinke himself where *he is*, and what *he doe's*, the next leape may be into the bottomlesse pit, especially if he shall adde *this* vnto all, that he will *father* such offences vpon the Lords allowance; & soe turne his extraordinary *mercy*, into extraordinary *impiety*. *David* had another spirit when he prayed against presumptuous sin, that he might be free from *the great transgression*; & did not the spirit of the diuell possesse these wofull men, they would surely doe the same. But *Satan* ha's enough, even *all* that he would have, to make them *build* their presumption vpon God, because he knowe's that by *soe* doing, he shall provoke God against them, to abhorre them for ever. But let vs looke yet a litle further.

Note

Ps. 19. 12

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Evill

3. The vrging of this example *thus*, doth *loose* vs, & *hynde* God, we are *enlarged* for all our life till the *last*, his hands are *tyed*, & that with *double bands*. Is not this vndeniably true, and a cleare consequence of this allegation? doe we not presse it to put off that wherevnto we are *bound*; not to give the Lord *first* of our lives, but to be free to come when we will, though at the last day, or *houre*, or *instant*? doe we not take it for graunted, that till we doe come, we must have *health*, *peace*, *foode*,

and all other *favours* from God? and that we must be accepted also?

So we are *free*, God is *bound*: we are free from *duty* during our pleasure (and a great deal of *kindnes* we must have for many yeares, and doe him no *service*) but he is *bound* to *māysaine* vs. *till* we come, and *entertayne* vs *when* we come. And is it not fearfull and hydeous impiety, for vs to seeke to *enslave* the Lord to our sinfull lives, and to set our selves at *liberty* in them against him.

But perhaps you will say, God hath bound himself saying. [*At what time soever a sinner shall repent him*] and that Christ hath done the same saying [*he that cometh to me I call not away*].

Well, if (touching the former) we graunt the truth of those words (though they are not *litterally* expressed in any text) that the Lord will refuse none, but is tyed to take them when they come, yet I hope it is with *condition*, of their coming as they *ought* to come; that is, with warrant from him, at his *call*: with *abilitie* of grace from him to repent: without both these, it is an impossibility to come; and if we come not *thus*, (as we are bounde to doe) God is *free* to refuse vs. Now they that have refused to come at his call in their *younge* yeares, may feare whether they shalbe called in their *olde* dayes, and neglecting grace so long; how can they hope to have it at such *short* warning as a litle before death; or, (as the most of them say) at the *last gaspe*? and without these they cannot come.

If the word [*whensoever*,] or, [*at what time soever &c.*] Were in the text, I hope it must be vnderstood of *Gods time*, not of *ours*; it must be one of his [*whens*] not of *ours*; we must not be *chusers* to *tye* him to our *time*;

Note.

time; noe, he is our commander and may binde vs to *his*: now all [*when soevers*] or [*what times soever*] are not the *times* that he calleth to repentance, for (besides what we sayd before) that they cannot hope of any time to be called, who have refused the time wherein they were called: we finde in the *parable*, that after the *eleauenth houre*, God sent not out to call any, it being a time *too late*, to *begin*; & *too short*, to *ende*, any busines of *his*, shewing that our last houre is noe time for vs to *goe* to God, or for God to *regard* vs. Note.

The same is the sence of the latter, which Christ saith: soe that God is bound to vs in *kindnes*, when we have performed our part of *obedience*. Doe your *duty*, you shall finde *mercy*.

Doe not make such *wylde* and vnlimmited propositions, vnderstand what God saith with all reuerence, wisdome, and *sebricity*, know, that every word of his flowes from infinite and vnsearcheable *wisdome*, and therefore must be conceived *warily*, as doctrine of *Note*. *piety*, not of *liberty*.

Beware of *bynding* God; and *looseing* thy self; least (for soe doing) he bynde thee hand and feete, and cast thee into vtter darknes: doe not once dare to thinke that *he*, that is *only wise*, could ever be soe *vnwise*, as to reueale, or write any *one* word, that might *imbase* himself, and give vs any occasion to *abuse* him, as in *thus* disputing from these propositions we doe.

Nay, we are *bound*, and he is *free*, it was his *free grace*, to make any such promises of grace, or glory to vs, vpon any tearmes, seing we brake with him and rebelled against him at the *first*, he might have chosen whether ever he would have given vs *one good word* or noe; now seing he hath, let that be acknowledged as his loue,

love, and let vs confesse our selves *bound* to every tittle of his truth, that doth or may concerne vs, and give our *best obedience* we can to the same with joy, greiuing allwayes that we can give *no better*. Be it farre from vs thus to *captivate* the Lord, soe much as in *one* thought it is abhominable, it is for malefactors (such as we are) to be *bounde*, not for him who is God almighty, and to be blessed for ever. And be it as farre from vs to *free our selves*, but allwayes to confesse our subjection to the Lord with all humility, yea to accomt it our *best liberty* to be bounde to him, whose law is absolute *liberty*. The service of *Satan* is the *basest bondage* that can be, and to be (by him) withholden from God (as we are) till the *last* of our lives, is absolute *slavery*, and that whereby he meane's *indeed* what soever he *pretends* to delude vs) to pull vs into his owne chaynes, to be bound vp with himself for ever, for refusing to come vnder Gods yoake, when he did call vs,

Thus we see in these few steps, how *farre* from *heaven*, how *neere* to *hell* these men goe, that make account to make but *one leape* from earth to heaven, and that at *last* *cast* too; if we should follow them further, in such other most blasphemous and cursed consequences, as would as well *flow* from this example (as they aledge it) as any of those we have *noted*, & refuted; we might goe with them to *hell gates*, and see them *shut in*, to the rest of their fellowes, who have lived and dyed in the *abuse* of this word, and *worke* of God, because their harts & lives, were *shut* against God, & they would not *open* to him, when he knockt *seasonably* to their salvation; but depended vpon the *mercy* shewed to this *herse*, without any consideration

of these *other* things that are therunto appertayning,
noe the diuell will not have them once dreame.

Either of the *extraordinary occasiō* of his conversion,
which was to expresse the *power*, & *honor* of Christs
diety, even *now*, in the time of his greatest *abasement*.
Or, of the *extraordinary meanes* of his conversion,
which was *Christ himself*,

Or, of the *extraordinary manner* of his conversion,
which was in a *small time*, on the *gallowes*, or *gibbets*,
or *croffe*; call it as you will.

Or of the *extraordinary manifestation* of his cōver-
sion, by the *honour* he gave to Christ, the *shame* he
tooke to himself, before all Christes enemyes, and
his owne, & that effectuall *prayer* of faith, whereto
he had soe *sweete an answer*.

These things and the like, shall not *once* enter into
the *imagination*s of these men; they only remember
he found *mercy*, without any further thought of any
of the aforesayd particulars, that respected either
what Christ did, or *why*; or *what* he did; no, *Satan* hy-
de's these matters from them, least they should (seing
soe many *words*, and *deedes too*, went to this bargaine)
bethinke themselves better of it, and not *rest* in such
a slight conceit of the matter as they have done. This
president, the diuell make's his pretended *pick-locke*
to open heaven to all these that he can thus delude:
but it proves *intruth*, his *pisfall* by which, millions of
men tumble into hell, in that *last moment* of time, whe-
rein all their life before, they made full account to
goe to heaven: & soe before they are a *ware*, the bot-
tomelesse pit hath swallowed them vp, & there they
lye *howling* in endles, & easelesse misery, who thought
verily, to have bene with this theife in *glory*.

Noe, noe, his *conveyance* was every way, and in all respects *extraordinary*, his passage is impossible (for ought we know) to any other; especially for *those* who would goe the same way, and yet regard not at all the way he went.

Thus we haue waded through some few, of those many things, which, are ordinarily alledged to hinder the happy successe of this sacred truth of God in mens hearts, and their happines by the obedience and practise of it. We will now goe no further in this way, the further we passe the *fowler* it will appeare, and our hope is that such as are not gone *too farre*, but are yet within *call*, may be recalled, by this voyce of God, which hath tolde them the *danger* of every *Step* they have gone as yet, & the *damnation* that they will run into, if they (*Will goe on*) & returne not, in due time, to save themselves, from the wrath to come, which is reserved for all *such*, as resist Gods revealed will; and labour to defend their *prostration* of duty, and their *practise* of impiety, by such plea's and pretences, as come from that hell *originally*, whervnto, (they that persist in them) must goe *eternally*.

And to preserve soe many of them as is possible; now they have *done* pleading for sin, (against the honour of God and the good of their owne soules) we will *begin* to plead both for God, and for *them*, and the happines they may have by this blessed truth of *his*, if they have such hearts as may yet be mooved & **¶** *Vse.* perswaded to embrace the same. To which end, we now come to our *third vse*, wherin we shall make tender vnto them of such *motiues*, and *considerations*, as may induce any *hart*, (that is not wholly *hardened* and sealed vp, or feared by *Satan*, to a *stark* senselesse

con-

condition), to yeeld both acknowledgment & obedience, to that which (in this behalfe) the Lord requireth of them.

The thing the Lord expecteth, is the *first* fruits of our liues to be *his*, that as soone as we can *undertake* any thing, we should *betake* our selves to his service; and can we conceit he doth this without right, or reason? Farre be such impious i[m]maginations from our harts. Let vs peruse *seriously*, some few particulers that may be *powerfull*, and *perswading* with vs herein. And first we will begin with those grounds whervpon *legally*, the Lord required them, which if we ponder, and paralell according to their *morall*, we shall see enough to moue men, to doe as God would have them: Note then, that the *first* fruits were to be given to these *ensuing* ends,

1. That the Lord might be honoured in this fauour and power, wherby he gave *Isaell* that goodly land, by giving him *his right* in the *first* of every thing.

The *first* of all was the Lords *right*, and appropriated to himself, by his owne ordinance and decree: he that gave it not, *rob'd* God of his *due*, and was guilty of the highest *sacriledge* that could be committed.

Yea, the Lord was soe absolute herein, that all the *first* should be entyre to himself, that if it were not given *him*, yet they might not reserve it to their *owne* vse, as is evident in that instance of the *asse*, which being an vncleane beast, it was to be redeemed by a *lambe*, but if the owner *did* not redeeme it, he might not let it live; but *must breake the neck of it*.

Exod. 34.
20.

Now then, who seeth not through this *shadow*, that our *first* time is the Lords absolute right, and that we

I a are

are *thelues* to our God, if we giue not our selves to him, and this *felony* we may not imagine to be easily answered; it is no slight matter to be false to the almighty, to be a *robber* of the most high, it is not our *booke* will save vs, yet *his booke* (if we wilbe ruled by it) will shew vs the meanes how to be *saved*. The reproach of being a *theife* and a *robber* is great, but the punishment is greater, he that repents not sincerely of it, will assuredly rue it.

2. God will have the *first* from vs, that we might have *right* to the rest from him.

Till he have *his* nothing of all we have is *ours*, when we have given him his right in the *first*, then, (and not till then) he gives vs right to the *rest*, and this is as plaine as the former, in the law of *Moses*, in the places forealedged,

Wherin as we see the great & most gracious goodness of God, in providing and caering for our *interest*, that what we have, we might holde it from him in a lawfull and comfortable *tenure*. See the greater and more heavy is the *morall* and meaning of this heavenly truth to them, who denying the Lord his right, doe thereby spoyle their *owns*, & by the impious neglect of giving the Lord *his*, doe proclaime to all men that nothing they have is *theirs*.

Every vngodly man that honours not the Lord with his *first*, is a *theife* and a *vsurper* of all he doth possesse, and lives vnder the just reproach of a *fellow* before God, and in the danger of that justice due to this offence, he is in perpetuall perill, every moment, & hath *heavens indignation* hanging over his head, ready at all times to be *arrested*, *arraigned*, *condemned* & *executed* by the high possessor of heaven & earth, the great

Lord

Lord and owner of all that every man hath, who give's no man title to any thing he hath, vnlesse he himselve *first* haue his due.

A wicked man's food, rayment, riches, his whole estate is *stolen goods*, wherefoever he go's, whatsoeuer he doe's, how long, or litle soe ever he live's, every instant of his life is perilous, and may prove the very moment of his eternall death; his life is not his *owne*, himself is not his *owne*, he hath no right to the breath he drawe's, to the earth he treads on, to any thing appertayning to his being: all is *forfeitt* to the Lord of all, for *non-payment* of these *first* fruits.

And herof may we be well assured; if we well consider, that the Lord would not be soe *unwise*, as to giue vs any thing to serue *Satan* withall, noe, he ever gave vs, that we might enjoy it to *his* honour, and to our *owne* advantage. Now if he please to giue vs harts, to giue him the *first*, he will graciously continue the same hart in vs, to giue him the *rest* also: whereas if *Satan* set in *first*, it is great wonder if he haue not the *last* too, for he vseth to holde hard for that which he *once* hath.

3. the Lord will haue the *first*, that the *rest* may be not only *ours*, but *sanctified* to vs also; that the *right* we haue in it, and the *use* we haue of it, may both be *seasoned* and *increased* on vs, when we haue *first* giuen God that which is Gods.

And without a *use sanctified* what is, or can any thing be to vs? *Beasts*, that want reason haue a naturall use of earthly comforts: *Pagans*, that want religion haue a *civil* use of that which they haue, now there is no difference betweene their *reason* and ours, but

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but this (wherein we exceede them) that we haue both the *naturall*, and *civill*, sanctified vnto vs. It is *theirs* in that state wherein sin left it, with the whole curse of sin vpon it: It is *ours* as Christ Iesus hath purified it and made it *holy* to vs. So all is *poysoned* to him that is in Gods *debt* for this due: and to him that hath discharged it (to his best ability) all is *blessed*.

Re. 11. 16

[*If the first fruits be holy* (saith the apostle) *the is the lump*] if they be not, the lump cannot be. Tye these *two* motives together, and see how strong they are to binde vs to the obedience of this instruction; if we have *no right* at all, then we *steale* all we have, if *not sanctified* vs, all we *steale* is envenomed to vs, for that *first*, we are theives to God in *using* what we have *no right* in, and next, we are *murderers* of our selves, in the *unsanctified* estate of that we use. Now what mighty and vnmatchable misery is it for a man; to live by *stealing* all he *eats*, and to *dye* in *eating*, all he *steals*. Let vs thinke on these motives, which are the *substance* of those inducements, which the ceremoniall law did but *shadow*.

We now proceede to presse a few other, which may yet *more* move vs, if we ponder them as we ought: either in the *benefit*, that comes by the obedience of this truth; or the *evil*, which flows from the neglect thereof. I pray you note *first*, that if we did give the Lord our *first*, doe but thinke what a world of *sin* we might *save*, which is committed and continued in by *millions* till we doe give our selves to God. Did we thoroughly know the danger of *our sin* (even the *least* we can be guilty of,) we would doe much to prevent it, seeing that, *everlasting perdition is due* to it; but

but here is a course that would spare a multitude, nay *all* our transgressions, for from the time we are the Lords, he reckon's *no sin* to vs, but account's *vs righteous*, and accept's *vs blamelesse* in his beloved.

Now to avoyd sin, with the *dishonor* it brings to God, with the *damnation* it brings to vs, (yea, & to others too, by our example,) who would not reder the Lord his *right*, & most freely let him have his *owne frō vs*, that *Satā* might never have *us* as his *owne frō God*. Assuredly he that could ever conceive the Lords *damage*, & his *owne disadvantage*, by sin: what *glory* God wants, what *greife* it is to his spirit, what *provocation* it is to his patience, how *iniurious* to his goodnes and favour, how *abusive* to his long suffering & loving kindenes; would never deny himself to the Lord from the *first day* he did vnderstand, how he might (*acceptably*) yeeld himself vnto him, what a *stranger* should *Satan* be in vs? what a *familiar* would God be to vs? if we begin betimes with him.

2. Consider that as we might *save much sin*, soe this were also the only way, to *have much grace*.

The more *early* any thing begins to be *good*, the more *goodnes* is hoped from it: the *sooner* any man sett's himself towards *heaven*, the *more heavenly* must he needes be. Oh, what a most happy thing is it, when *grace* begins to grow *besimes* in vs; *then* is the Lord much *honoured* by vs, *then* are men much *bettered* by vs, *then* are we *fitter* for all duty; *then* are we more *safe* from *sin*, & the *cōtagion* of *sinners*; *then* are we more able to *worke out* our salvation; and *more sure* to possess the same. A mans life is a *heaven vpon earth*, when his graces are *well growne* in him, his affection, his conversation cannot but be in *heaven*: such a man may
be

be *bolde* with his God at all times, and *Satan* can have no hope to prevaile against *him*, when cometh soe to passe with a man in *good*, as it did with him in *evill*, in whome the divell had beene *from a childe*, he was the more *hardly* cast out, & soe the more *easily* is he kept out, and *hardly* (nay never shall he possibly enter) to possesse that person, who *of a childe* and from the *first* hath beene gracious.

What have we in this worlde *to doe*, or to busy our selves *most* about, but to get *that* grace that may further vs to glory: and what better way to get *much*, then to fall to worke, *as soone* as is possible?

3. Consider, that the Lord never gave any man *a time of grace*, that would dare to *set* God a time *to come for it*.

The man that shalbe soe *impious*, and *impudent*; as to *prescribe* and *lymit* the Lord, at what time he will come, never hath hart to come *at all*. Is it not good reason that when we *neglect*, (yea and *despise* too) so great salvation, as is *tendered*, nay *commanded* to vs, in our *tender* yeares, that *he* whome we have denyed in *his time* of grace, should deny vs in our *time of sin*? especially considering that he hath power, to *confine* vs, to the instant of *his call*; but it is *intollerable* impiety in vs, to *bounde him to ours*. Shall God waite vpon the *diuell*, and accept vs at that *houre*, when our *sin* will let vs come, we having cast off *his day*, & *houre*, of *mercy* before?

How roade we in the scriptures for *this*, what finde we? nothing but *thunder* and *lightning*, from heaven, to *peale* these wicked wretches to *perdition*, [*They that were bidde were not worthy*] saith Christ. And againe [*The dore was shut*] against them that were not prepared
for

for the bridegrome, at the instant of his comming, and though (at their *owne time*) they came (afterwarde) with much *intreaty*, yet it could not be opened, but they were banished *thence*, and abandoned to hell. And yet againe, by the prophets: [*Because I have called and you have refused, therefore shall yet cry and not be heard*] So that (you see) God sett's *not* time to him, that sett's God *any*, nothing remayne's to *such*, but *disdayne* from heaven, *damnation* in hell.

Pro. 1.
24. 25.
26.
Zach. 7.
13.

4. Consider, that what extraordinary honour God ever intended to himself, by any *man*, or *men*, whome he would make *instruments* of the same, he meant to make all such *persons* gracious *besime*.

Doe but ponder it well in the *first Adam*, & in the *second*. In the *first*, all *mankinde* might have beene happy, and God *mightrily* honoured through all generations; now to bring this about, *Adam* shalbe righteous from his *first being*, and honour the Lord from the *time* of his *creation*. In the *second Adam*, all the *elect* shalbe happy, & (through him) the glory of Gods infinite favour, shall shyne vpon *them*; & to furnish him for this *wonderfull worke*, he sanctified himself *before* he was *borne*, and (after) in our *infancy*, and (soe) throughout *all ages* of our life, during the dayes he lived. Indeece, he attayned not our *olde age* (I will not take vpon me *peremptorily* to determine *Why*; but) it may be it was to shew, that *olde age* doth not *easily* attayne him; that soe these presumptuous, *olde fooles*, might be the more *terrefyed*, and *daunted*, from daring to be so *audacious*, as they have beene.

Did the Lord ever *glorify* himself in that man, or *glorify* that man with himself, that (refusing to come

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when God called) came when himself would name: *one* instance if it be possible. Noe, he will sanctify *all such*; as shall be glorious *to him* in earth, or glorious *with him* in heaven. I say he will sanctify *all such*; in his purpose before time, and in his *praisse*, in such time, as wheriu they shall come when he shall call, be it more early, as *Jeremiah: Josiah; John Baptist; or more late, as Abraham;* and such other, as we have named before. He gave them hearts to attend *his time*, not *one* of them ever dared to reject *that*, and to cause the Lord to attend *theirs*.

The *few inducements* I hope shall draw, and enforce vs to the Lord, *whose* we are, and *whose* all our dayes are, and all our *abilities* both of body and soule; *from him* we have them in *mercy*, if he have them not *from vs* (again) in *duty*, it had beene better for vs we had *never beene borne*.

Lay these holy considerations to hart, & offer not to presume ypon grace in *thine owne time*, it is presumptuous sin to doe soe: that man is extraordinarily gracelesse, that dare's presume of grace in *extraordinary time*. *They* that come to crave more then *common kindnes* of vs, must be more then *common freinds* vnto vs; little reason hath God to be more then *usually good* to them; who have beene *grossly evil* to him; as *all they* are who render him not his right in their *first dayes*. If we would be the Lords *for ever*, let vs ever resolve to be soe *as the first*.

Dearely beloved, take these things into *deliberation*, let them lodge in our hearts, *rest* and *reasse* in our myndes, that soe the Lord our God may take vs into his *sauour* and compassion. *Olde, yonge, middle-age, All ages,* have this in good remembrance, for it is a truth that

make's vs *happy* if we hearken to it, *miserable* if we doe not. To the *aged* I say (yet not I, but the Lord) looke *backward*, see how much of your *glasse* is out, and *forward*, how little remayneth to *run*, and *run* apace to the living God to be received, before *all* be *gone*, and no hope be left; thinke that voyce of God spoken to you: [*It is sufficient that we have spent the time past* 1. *Pet.* 4. *after the lusts of the flesh &c*] & therevpon hasten towards heaven with all expedition, it may (be the Lord may take that *little* time that is left, and receiue you into everlasting habitations. To the *younge* I say also, [*Remember thy Creator (& thy redeemer too) in the dayes of thy youth*] and imagine that other voyce of heaven spokē to you [*for it is now time to awake; &c*] it is great reason that the *flowre* of your abilityes should be the Lords, *from Whome* you had them, and *to Whome* your account must be made for them. Re. 13. 11

In a word, I say to you *all*, and to *every one* of you: Doe but thinke 1. how *farre* it is to heaven, seing we must goe from *sin* to *grace*, that we may, goe *thence*, to *glory* 2. how *hard* it is, to finde the way, because flesh & blood cānot *shew* it: *then* 3. how *hard* to enter, & goe on, because the gate is so *straigh*t, & the enemy soe *strong*, & we soe *weake*, & *wearied* out with sin cōtinually clogging vs. And soe I end with that speech in Iob: [*if thou wilt seeke vnto God early, and make thy supplication to the almighty: if thou be pure and vp*right, Job. 35. 13 *surely he would now awake vnto thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousnes prosperous: and though thy begining be but small, yet thy latter end should greatly encrease.*] And that *thus* we may be, and *thus* doe, Let *all sorts* vnceffantly seeke his face for ever. 6. 7

Glory be to God on high.